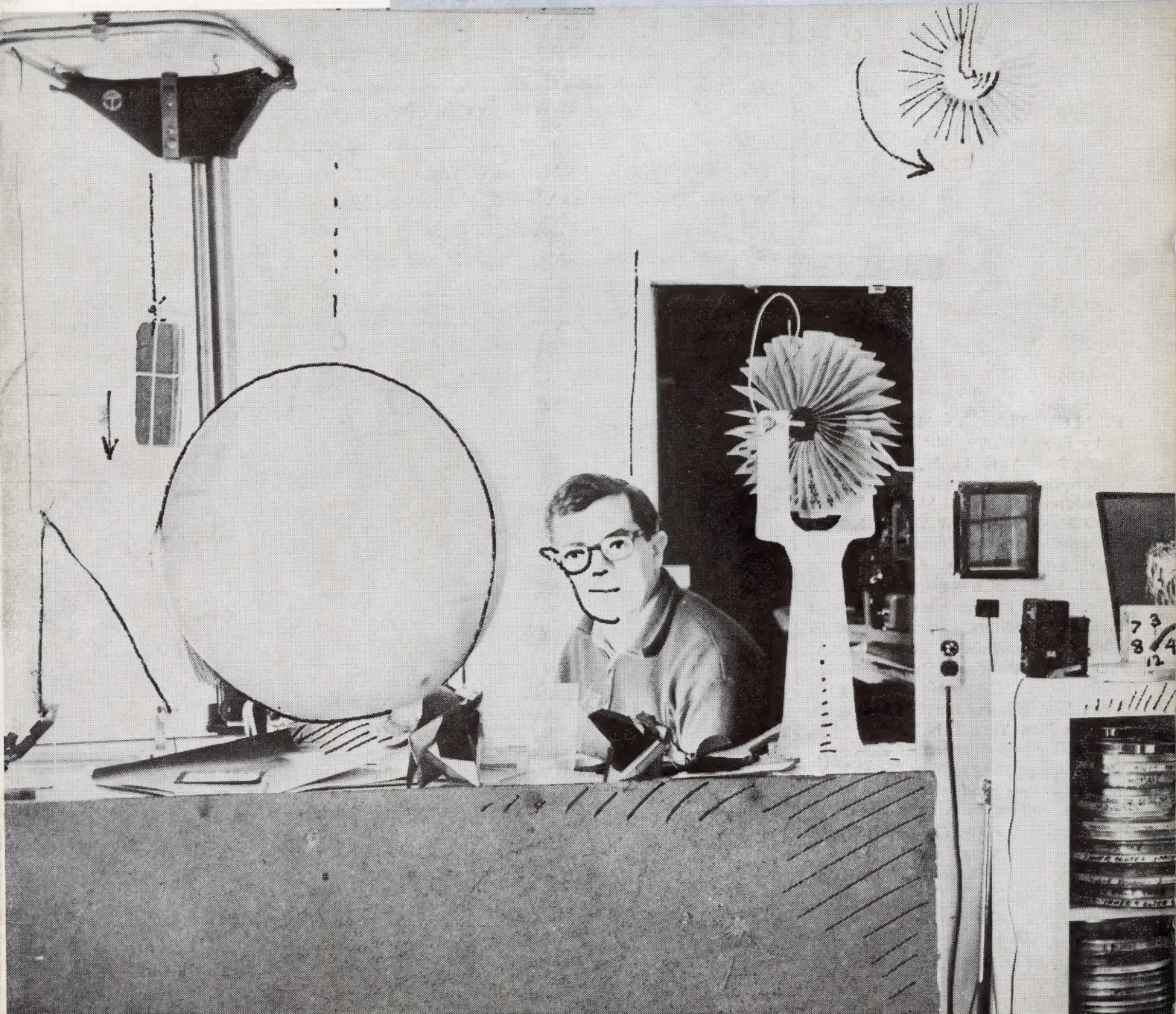


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ON THE COVER: ROBERT BREER

NOTES ON THE AUTEUR THEORY IN 1962

by Andrew Sarris

I CALL these sketches *Shadowgraphs*, partly by the designation to remind you at once that they derive from the darker side of life, partly because like other shadowgraphs they are not directly visible. When I take a shadowgraph in my hand, it makes no impression on me, and gives me no clear conception of it. Only when I hold it up opposite the wall, and now look not directly at it, but at that which appears on the wall, am I able to see it. So also with the picture which I wish to show here, an inward picture which does not become perceptible until I see it through the external. This external is perhaps quite unobtrusive but not until I look through it, do I discover that inner picture which I desire to show you an inner picture too delicately drawn to be outwardly visible, woven as it is of the tenderest moods of the soul.

Soren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*

An exhibitor once asked me if an old film I had recommended was *really* good or good only according to the *auteur* theory. I appreciate the distinction. Like the alchemists of old, *auteur* critics are notorious for rationalizing leaden clinkers into golden nuggets. Their judgments are seldom vindicated because few spectators are conditioned to perceive in individual works the organic unity of a director's career. On a given evening, a film by John Ford must take its chances as if it were a film by Henry King. Am I implying that the weakest Ford is superior to the strongest King? Yes! This kind of unqualified affirmation seems to reduce the *auteur* theory to a game of aesthetic solitaire with all the cards turned face up. By *auteur* rules, the Fords will come up aces as invariably as the Kings will come up deuces. Presumably we can all go home as soon as the directorial signature is flashed on the screen. To those who linger, *The Gunfighter* (King 1950) may appear worthier than *Flesh* (Ford 1932). (And how deeply one must burrow to undermine Ford!) No matter. The *auteur* theory is unyielding. If, by definition, Ford is invariably superior to King, any evidence to the contrary is merely an optical illusion. Now what could be sillier than this inflexible attitude? Let us abandon the absurdities of the *auteur* theory so that we may return to the chaos of common sense.

My labored performance as devil's advocate notwithstanding, I intend to praise the *auteur* theory, not to bury it. At the very least, I would like to grant the condemned system a hearing before its execution. The trial has dragged on for years, I know, and everyone is now bored by the abstract reasoning involved. I have little in the way of new evidence or new arguments, but I would like to change some of my previous testimony. What follows is consequently less a manifesto than a credo, a somewhat disorganized credo, to be sure, expressed in formless notes rather than in formal brief.

I. AIMEZ-VOUS BRAHMS?

"Goethe? Shakespeare? Everything signed with their names is considered good, and one wracks one's brains to find beauty in their stupidities and failures, thus distorting the general taste. All these great talents, the Goethes, the Shakespeares, the Beethovens, the Michelangelos, created, side by side with their masterpieces, works not merely mediocre, but quite simply frightful."

Tolstoy, *Journal*, 1895-1899

The preceding quotation prefaces the late Andre Bazin's famous critique of *la politique des auteurs* which appeared in the *Cahiers du Cinema* of April 1957. Because no comparably lucid statement opposing the *politique* has appeared since that time, I would like to discuss some of Bazin's arguments with reference to the current situation. (I except, of course, Richard Roud's penetrating article, *The French Line*, which dealt mainly with the post-*nouvelle vague* situation when the *politique* had degenerated into McMahonism.)

As Tolstoy's observation indicates, *la politique des auteurs* antedates the cinema. For centuries, the Elizabethan *politique* has decreed the reading of every Shakespearean play before any encounter with the Jonsonian repertory. At some point between *Timon of Athens* and *Volpone*, this procedure is patently unfair to Jonson's reputation. But not really. On the most superficial level of artistic reputations, the *auteur* theory is merely a figure of speech. If the man in the street could not invoke Shakespeare's name as an identifiable

cultural reference, he would probably have less contact with all things artistic. The Shakespearean scholar, by contrast, will always be driven to explore the surrounding terrain with the result that all the Elizabethan dramatists gain more rather than less recognition through the pre-eminence of one of their number. Therefore on balance, the *politique* as a figure of speech does more good than harm.

Occasionally, some iconoclast will attempt to demonstrate the fallacy of this figure of speech. We will be solemnly informed that *The Gambler* was a potboiler for Dostoevski in the most literal sense of the word. In Jacques Rivette's *Paris nous appartient*, Jean-Claude Brialy asks Betty Schneider if she would still admire *Pericles* if it were not signed by Shakespeare. Zealous musicologists have played *Wellington's Victory* so often as an example of inferior Beethoven that I have grown fond of the piece, atrocious as it is. The trouble with such iconoclasm is that it presupposes an encyclopedic awareness of the *auteur* in question. If one is familiar with every Beethoven composition, *Wellington's Victory*, in itself, will hardly tip the scale toward Mozart, Bach or Schubert. Yet, that is the issue raised by the *auteur* theory. If not Beethoven, who? And why? Let us say that the *politique* for composers went Mozart, Beethoven, Bach and Schubert. Each composer would represent a task force of compositions, arrayed by type and quality with the mighty battleships and aircraft carriers flanked by flotillas of cruisers, destroyers and minesweepers. When the Mozart task force collides with the Beethoven task force, symphonies roar against symphonies, quartets maneuver against quartets, and it is simply no contest with the operas. As a single force, Beethoven's nine symphonies outgun any nine of Mozart's forty-one symphonies, both sets of quartets are almost on a par with Schubert's, but *The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* will blow poor *Fidelio* out of the water. Then, of course, there is Bach with an entirely different deployment of composition and instrumentation. The Haydn and Handel cultists are moored in their inlets ready to join the fray, and the moderns with their nuclear noises are still mobilizing their forces.

It can be argued that any exact ranking of artists is arbitrary and pointless. Arbitrary up to a point, perhaps, but pointless, no. Even Bazin concedes the polemical value of the *politique*. Many film critics would rather not commit them-

selves to specific rankings ostensibly because every film should be judged on its own merits. In many instances, this reticence masks the critic's condescension to the medium. Since it has not been firmly established that the cinema is an art at all, it requires cultural audacity to establish a pantheon for film directors. Without such audacity, I see little point in being a film critic. Anyway, is it possible to honor a work of art without honoring the artist involved? I think not. Of course, any idiot can erect a pantheon out of hearsay and gossip. Without specifying any work, the Saganesque seducer will ask quite cynically, "Aimez-vous Brahms?" The fact that Brahms is included in the pantheon of high-brow pick-ups does not invalidate the industrious criticism which justifies the composer as a figure of speech.

Unfortunately, some critics have embraced the *auteur* theory as a short-cut to film scholarship. With a "you-see-it-or-you-don't" attitude toward the reader, the particularly lazy *auteur* critic can save himself the drudgery of communication and explanation. Indeed, at their worst, *auteur* critiques are less meaningful than the straightforward plot reviews which pass for criticism in America. Without the necessary research and analysis, the *auteur* theory can degenerate into the kind of snobbish racket which is associated with the merchandising of paintings.

It was largely against the inadequate theoretical formulation of *la politique des auteurs* that Bazin was reacting in his friendly critique. (Henceforth, I will abbreviate *la politique des auteurs* as the *auteur* theory to avoid confusion.) Bazin introduces his arguments within the context of a family quarrel over the editorial policies of *Cahiers*. He fears that by assigning reviews to admirers of given directors, notably Alfred Hitchcock, Jean Renoir, Roberto Rossellini, Fritz Lang, Howard Hawks and Nicholas Ray, every work, major and minor, of these exalted figures is made to radiate the same beauties of style and meaning. Specifically, Bazin notes a distortion when the kindly indulgence accorded the imperfect work of a Minnelli is coldly withheld from the imperfect work of Huston. The inherent bias of the *auteur* theory magnifies the gap between the two films.

I would make two points here. First, Bazin's greatness as a critic, (and I believe strongly that he was the greatest film critic who ever lived,) rested in his disinterested conception of the cinema as a universal entity. It follows that he would react against a theory which cultivated

what he felt were inaccurate judgments for the sake of dramatic paradoxes. He was, if anything, generous to a fault, seeking in every film some vestige of the cinematic art. That he would seek justice for Huston vis-a-vis Minnelli on even the secondary levels of creation indicates the scrupulousness of his critical personality.

However, my second point would seem to contradict my first. Bazin was wrong in this instance insofar as any critic can be said to be wrong in retrospect. We are dealing here with Minnelli in his *Lust for Life* period and Huston in his *Moby Dick* period. Both films can be considered failures on almost any level. The miscasting alone is disastrous. The snarling force of Kirk Douglas as the tormented Van Gogh, the brutish insensibility of Anthony Quinn as Gauguin, and the nervously scraping tension between these two absurdly limited actors, deface Minnelli's meticulously objective decor, itself inappropriate for the mood of its subject. The director's presentation of the paintings themselves is singularly unperceptive in the repeated failure to maintain the proper optical distance from canvases which arouse the spectator less by their detailed draughtsmanship than by the shock of a *gestalt* wholeness. As for *Moby Dick*, Gregory Peck's Ahab deliberates long enough to let all the demons flee the *Pequod*, taking Melville's Lear-like fantasies with them. Huston's epic technique with its casually shifting camera viewpoint then drifts on an intellectually becalmed sea toward a fitting rendezvous with a rubber whale. These two films are neither the best nor the worst of their time. The question is which deserves the harder review. And there's the rub. At the time, Huston's stock in America was higher than Minnelli's. Most critics expected Huston to do "big" things, and, if they thought about it all, expected Minnelli to stick to "small" things like musicals. Although neither film was a critical failure, audiences stayed away in large enough numbers to make the cultural respectability of the projects suspect. On the whole, *Lust for Life* was more successful with the audiences it did reach than was *Moby Dick*.

In retrospect, *Moby Dick* represents the turning downward of Huston as a director to be taken seriously. By contrast, *Lust for Life* is simply an isolated episode in the erratic career of an interesting stylist. The exact size of Minnelli's talent may inspire controversy, but he does represent something in the cinema today. Huston is virtually a forgotten man with a few actors'

classics behind him surviving as the ruins of a once-promising career. Both Eric Rohmer, who denigrated Huston in 1957, and Jean Domarchi, who was kind to Minnelli that same year, somehow saw the future more clearly on an *auteur* level than did Bazin. As Santayana has remarked: "It is a great advantage for a system of philosophy to be substantially true." If the *auteur* critics of the Fifties had not scored so many coups of clairvoyance, the *auteur* theory would not be worth discussing in the Sixties. I must add that, at the time, I would have agreed with Bazin on this and every other objection to the *auteur* theory, but subsequent history, that history about which Bazin was always so mystical, has substantially confirmed most of the principles of the *auteur* theory. Ironically, most of the original supporters of the *auteur* theory have now abandoned it. Some have discovered more useful *politiques* as directors and would-be directors. Others have succumbed to a European-oriented pragmatism where intention is now more nearly equal to talent in critical relevance. Luc Moullet's belated discovery that Samuel Fuller was, in fact, fifty years old, signaled a reorientation of *Cahiers* away from the American cinema. (The handwriting was already on the wall when Truffaut remarked recently that where he and his colleagues had "discovered" *auteurs*, his successors have "invented" them.)

Bazin then explores the implications of Giraudoux' epigram: "There are no works; there are only authors." Truffaut has seized upon this paradox as the battle-cry of *la politique des auteurs*. Bazin casually demonstrates how the contrary can be argued with equal probability of truth or error. He subsequently dredges up the equivalents of *Wellington's Victory* for Voltaire, Beaumarchais, Flaubert and Gide to document his point. Bazin then yields some ground to Rohmer's argument that the history of art does not confirm the decline with age of authentic geniuses like Titian, Rembrandt, Beethoven, or nearer to us, Bonnard, Matisse and Stravinsky. Bazin agrees with Rohmer that it is inconsistent to attribute senility only to aging film directors while at the same time honoring the gnarled austerity of Rembrandt's later style. This is one of the crucial propositions of the *auteur* theory because it refutes the popular theory of decline for aging giants like Renoir and Chaplin, and asserts instead that as a director becomes older, he is likely to become more profoundly personal

than most audiences and critics can appreciate. However, Bazin immediately retrieves his lost ground by arguing that whereas the senility of directors is no longer at issue, the evolution of an art-form is. Where directors fail and fall is in the realm not of psychology but of history. If a director fails to keep pace with the development of his medium, his work will become obsolescent. What seems like senility is in reality a disharmony between the subjective inspiration of the director and the objective evolution of the medium. By making this distinction between the subjective capability of an *auteur* and the objective value of a work in film history, Bazin reinforces the popular impression that the Griffith of *Birth of a Nation* is superior to the Griffith of *Abraham Lincoln* in the perspective of timing which similarly distinguishes the Eisenstein of *Potemkin* from the Eisenstein of *Ivan the Terrible*, the Renoir of *La Grande Illusion* from the Renoir of *Picnic in the Grass* and the Welles of *Citizen Kane* from the Welles of *Arkadin*.

I have embroidered Bazin's actual examples for the sake of greater contact with the American scene. In fact, Bazin implicitly denies a decline in the later works of Chaplin and Renoir, and never mentions Griffith. He suggests circuitously that Hawks' *Scarface* is clearly superior to Hawks' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* although the *auteur* critics would argue the contrary. Bazin is particularly critical of Rivette's circular reasoning on *Monkey Business* as the proof of Hawks' genius. "One sees the danger," Bazin warns, "which is an aesthetic cult of personality."

Bazin's taste, it should be noted, was far more discriminating than that of American film historians. Films Bazin cites as unquestionable classics are still quite debatable here in America. After all, *Citizen Kane* was originally panned by James Agee, Richard Griffith and Bosley Crowther, and *Scarface* has never been regarded as one of the landmarks of the American cinema by native critics. I would say that the American public has been ahead of its critics on both *Kane* and *Scarface*. Thus to argue against the *auteur* theory in America is to assume that we have anyone of Bazin's sensibility and dedication to provide an alternative, and we simply don't.

Bazin finally concentrates on the American cinema which invariably serves as the decisive battleground of the *auteur* theory whether over *Monkey Business* or *Party Girl*. Unlike most "serious" American critics, Bazin likes Holly-

wood films, but not solely because of the talent of this or that director. For Bazin, the distinctively American comedy, western and gangster genres have their own mystiques apart from the personalities of the directors concerned. How can one review an Anthony Mann western, Bazin asks, as if it were not an expression of the genre's conventions. Not that Bazin dislikes Anthony Mann's westerns. He is more concerned with otherwise admirable westerns which the *auteur* theory rejects because their directors happen to be unfashionable. Again, Bazin's critical generosity comes to the fore against the negative aspects of the *auteur* theory.

Some of Bazin's arguments tend to overlap each other as if to counter rebuttals from any direction. He argues in turn that the cinema is less individualistic an art than painting or literature, that Hollywood is less individualistic than other cinemas, and that even so, the *auteur* theory never really applies anywhere. In upholding historical determinism, Bazin goes so far as to speculate that if Racine had lived in Voltaire's century, it is unlikely that Racine's tragedies would have been any more inspired than Voltaire's. Presumably the Age of Reason would have stifled Racine's Neoclassical impulses. Perhaps. Perhaps not. Bazin's hypothesis can hardly be argued to a verifiable conclusion, but I suspect somewhat greater reciprocity between an artist and his *Zeitgeist* than Bazin would allow. He mentions more than once, and in other contexts, capitalism's influence on the cinema. Without denying this influence, I still find it impossible to attribute X directors and Y films to any particular system or culture. Why should the Italian cinema be superior to the German cinema after one war when the reverse was true after the previous one? As for artists conforming to the spirit of their age, that spirit is often expressed in contradictions whether of Stravinsky and Sibelius, Fielding and Richardson, Picasso and Matisse, Chateaubriand and Stendhal. Even if the artist does not spring from the idealized head of Zeus, free of the embryonic stains of history, history itself is profoundly affected by his arrival. If we cannot imagine Griffith's *October* or Eisenstein's *Birth of a Nation* because we find it difficult to transpose one artist's unifying conceptions of Lee and Lincoln to the other's dialectical conceptions of Lenin and Kerensky, we are nevertheless compelled to recognize other differences in the personalities of these two pioneers beyond their re-

spective cultural complexes. It is with these latter differences that the *auteur* theory is most deeply concerned. If directors and other artists cannot be wrenched from their historical environments, aesthetics is reduced to a subordinate branch of ethnography.

I have not done full justice to the subtlety of Bazin's reasoning and to the civilized skepticism with which he propounds his own arguments as slight probabilities rather than absolute certainties. Contemporary opponents of the *auteur* theory may feel that Bazin himself is suspect as a member of the *Cahiers* family. After all, Bazin does express qualified approval of the *auteur* theory as a relatively objective method of evaluating films apart from the subjective perils of impressionistic and ideological criticism. Better to analyze the director's personality than the critic's nerve centers or politics. Nevertheless, Bazin makes his stand clear by concluding: "This is not to deny the role of the author, but to restore to him the preposition without which the noun is only a limp concept. 'Author,' undoubtedly, but of what?"

Bazin's syntactical flourish raises an interesting problem in English usage. The French preposition "de" serves many functions, but among others, those of possession and authorship. In English, the preposition "by" once created a scandal in the American film industry when Otto Preminger had the temerity to advertise *The Man With the Golden Arm* as a film "by Otto Preminger." Novelist Nelson Algren and the Screenwriter's Guild raised such an outcry that the offending preposition was deleted. Even the noun "author" (which I cunningly mask as "*auteur*") has a literary connotation in English. In general conversation, an "author" is invariably taken to be a writer. Since "by" is a preposition of authorship and not of ownership like the ambiguous "de," the fact that Preminger both produced and directed *The Man With the Golden Arm* did not entitle him in America to the preposition "by." No one would have objected to the possessive form: "Otto Preminger's *The Man With the Golden Arm*." But even in this case, a novelist of sufficient reputation is usually honored with the possessive designation. Now this is hardly the case in France where *The Red and the Black* is advertised as "un film de Claude Autant-Lara." In America, "directed by" is all the director can claim when he is not also a well-known producer like Alfred Hitchcock or Cecil B. De Mille.

Since most American film critics are oriented toward literature or journalism rather than toward future film-making, most American film criticism is directed toward the script instead of toward the screen. The writer-hero in *Sunset Boulevard* complains that people don't realize that someone "writes a picture; they think the actors make it up as they go along." It would never occur to this writer or to most of his colleagues that people are even less aware of the director's function.

Of course, the much-abused man in the street has a good excuse not to be aware of the *auteur* theory even as a figure of speech. Even on the so-called classic level, he is not encouraged to ask *aimez-vous* Griffith or *aimez-vous* Eisenstein? Instead, it is which Griffith and which Eisenstein? As for less acclaimed directors, he is lucky to find their names in the fourth paragraph of the typical review. I doubt that most American film critics really believe that an indifferently directed film is comparable to an indifferently written book. However, there is little point in wailing at the Philistines on this issue, particularly when some progress is being made in telling one director from another, at least when the film comes from abroad. The Fellini, Bergman, Kurosawa and Antonioni promotions have helped push more directors up to the first paragraph of a review even ahead of the plot synopsis. So we mustn't complain.

Where I wish to redirect the argument is toward the relative position of the American cinema as opposed to the Foreign cinema. Some critics have advised me that the *auteur* theory only applies to a small number of artists who make personal films, not to the run-of-the-mill Hollywood director who takes whatever assignment is available. Like most Americans who take films seriously, I have always felt a cultural inferiority complex about Hollywood. Just a few years ago, I would have thought it unthinkable to speak in the same breath of a "commercial" director like Hitchcock and a "pure" director like Bresson. Even today, *Sight and Sound* uses different type-sizes for Bresson and Hitchcock films. After years of tortured reevaluation, I am now prepared to stake my critical reputation, such as it is, on the proposition that Alfred Hitchcock is artistically superior to Robert Bresson by every criterion of excellence, and further, that, film for film, director for director, the American cinema has been consistently superior to that of the rest of the world from 1915 through 1962. Consequently, I

now regard the *auteur* theory primarily as a critical device for recording the history of the American cinema, the only cinema in the world worth exploring in depth beneath the frosting of a few great directors at the top.

These propositions remain to be proven and, I hope, debated. The proof will be difficult because direction in the cinema is a nebulous force in literary terms. In addition to its own jargon, the director's craft often pulls in the related jargons of music, painting, sculpture, dance, literature, theatre, architecture, all in a generally futile attempt to describe the indescribable. What is it the old jazz man says of his art? If you gotta ask what it is, it ain't? Well, the cinema is like that. Criticism can only attempt an approximation, a reasonable preponderance of accuracy over inaccuracy. I know the exceptions to the *auteur* theory as well as anyone. I can feel the human attraction of an audience going one way when I am going the other. The temptations of cynicism, common sense and facile culture-mongering are always very strong, but somehow I feel that the *auteur* theory is the only hope for extending the appreciation of personal qualities in the cinema. By grouping and evaluating films according to directors, the critic can rescue individual achievements from an unjustifiable anonymity. If medieval architects and African sculptors are anonymous today, it is not because they deserved to be. When Ingmar Bergman bemoans the alienation of the modern artist from the collective spirit which rebuilt the Cathedral at Chartres, he is only dramatizing his own individuality for an age which has rewarded him handsomely for the travail of his alienation. There is no justification for penalizing Hollywood directors for the sake of collective mythology. So invective aside, aimez-vous Cukor?

II. WHAT IS THE AUTEUR THEORY?

As far as I know, there is no definition of the *auteur* theory in the English language, that is, by any American or British critic. Truffaut has recently gone to great pains to emphasize that the *auteur* theory was merely a polemical weapon for a given time and a given place, and I am willing to take him at his word. But lest I be accused of misappropriating a theory no one wants anymore, I give the *Cahiers* critics full credit for the original formulation of an idea which reshaped my thinking on the cinema. First of all, how does the *auteur* theory differ from a straightforward theory of directors. Ian Cameron's

article, "Films, Directors and Critics" in *Movie* of September 1962, makes an interesting comment on this issue: "The assumption which underlies all the writing in *Movie* is that the director is the author of a film, the person who gives it any distinctive quality. There are quite large exceptions, with which I shall deal later." So far, so good, at least for the *auteur* theory which even allows for exceptions. However, Cameron continues: "On the whole we accept the cinema of directors, although without going to the farthest-out extremes of the *la politique des auteurs* which makes it difficult to think of a bad director making a good film and almost impossible to think of a good director making a bad one." We are back to Bazin again although Cameron naturally uses different examples. That three otherwise divergent critics like Bazin, Roud and Cameron make essentially the same point about the *auteur* theory suggests a common fear of its abuses. I believe there is a misunderstanding here about what the *auteur* theory actually claims, particularly since the theory itself is so vague at the present time.

First of all, the *auteur* theory, at least as I understand it and now intend to express it, claims neither the gift of prophecy nor the option of extracinematic perception. Directors, even *auteurs*, do not always run true to form, and the critic can never assume that a bad director will always make a bad film. No, not always, but almost always, and that is the point. What is a bad director, but a director who has made many bad films? What is the problem then? Simply this: the badness of a director is not necessarily considered the badness of a film. If Joseph Pevney directed Garbo, Cherkassov, Olivier, Belmont, and Harriet Andersson in *The Cherry Orchard*, the resulting spectacle might not be entirely devoid of merit with so many subsidiary *auteurs* to cover up for Joe. In fact, with this cast and this literary property, a Lumet might be safer than a Welles. The realities of casting apply to directors as well as actors, but the *auteur* theory would demand the gamble with Welles, if he were willing.

Marlon Brando has shown us that a film can be made without a director. Indeed, *One-Eyed Jacks* is more entertaining than many films with directors. A director-conscious critic would find it difficult to say anything good or bad about direction which is non-existent. One can talk here about photography, editing, acting, but not di-

rection. The film even has personality, but like *The Longest Day* and *Mutiny on the Bounty*, it is a cipher directorially. Obviously, the *auteur* theory cannot possibly cover every vagrant charm of the cinema. Nevertheless, the first premise of the *auteur* theory is the technical competence of a director as a criterion of value. A badly directed or undirected film has no importance in a critical scale of values, but one can make interesting conversation about the subject, the script, the acting, the color, the photography, the editing, the music, the costumes, the décor etc. That is the nature of the medium. You always get more for your money than mere art. Now by the *auteur* theory, if a director has no technical competence, no elementary flair for the cinema, he is automatically cast out from the pantheon of directors. A great director has to be at least a good director. This is true in any art. What constitutes directorial talent is more difficult to define abstractly. There is less disagreement, however, on this first level of the *auteur* theory than there will be later.

The second premise of the *auteur* theory is the distinguishable personality of the director as a criterion of value. Over a group of films, a director must exhibit certain recurring characteristics of style which serve as his signature. The way a film looks and moves should have some relationship to the way a director thinks and feels. This is an area where American directors are generally superior to foreign directors. Because so much of the American cinema is commissioned, a director is forced to express his personality through the visual treatment of material rather than through the literary content of the material. A Cukor who works with all sorts of projects has a more developed abstract style than a Bergman who is free to develop his own scripts. Not that Bergman lacks personality, but his work has declined with the depletion of his ideas largely because his technique never equaled his sensibility. Joseph L. Mankiewicz and Billy Wilder are other examples of writer-directors without adequate technical mastery. By contrast, Douglas Sirk and Otto Preminger have moved up the scale because their miscellaneous projects reveal a stylistic consistency.

The third and ultimate premise of the *auteur* theory is concerned with interior meaning, the ultimate glory of the cinema as an art. Interior meaning is extrapolated from the tension between a director's personality and his material. This

conception of interior meaning comes close to what Astruc defines as *mise-en-scene*, but not quite. It is not quite the vision of the world a director projects, nor quite his attitude toward life. It is ambiguous in any literary sense because part of it is imbedded in the stuff of the cinema and cannot be rendered in non-cinematic terms. Truffaut has called it the temperature of the director on the set, and that is a close approximation of its professional aspect. Dare I come out and say what I think it to be is an élan of the soul?

Lest I seem unduly mystical, let me hasten to add that all I mean by soul is that intangible difference between one personality and another, all other things being equal. Sometimes, this difference is expressed by no more than a beat's hesitation in the rhythm of a film. In one sequence of *La Règle du jeu*, Renoir gallops up the stairs, turns to his right with a lurching movement, stops in hop-like uncertainty when his name is called by a coquettish maid, and then, with marvelous post-reflex continuity, resumes his bearishly shambling journey to the heroine's boudoir. If I could describe the musical grace note of that momentary suspension, and I can't, I might be able to provide a more precise definition of the *auteur* theory. As it is, all I can do is point at the specific beauties of interior meaning on the screen, and later catalogue the moments of recognition.

The three premises of the *auteur* theory may be visualized as three concentric circles, the outer circle as technique, the middle circle personal style, and the inner circle interior meaning. The corresponding roles of the director may be designated as those of a technician, a stylist and an *auteur*. There is no prescribed course by which a director passes through the three circles. Godard once remarked that Visconti had evolved from a *metteur-en-scene* to an *auteur* while Rossellini had evolved from an *auteur* to a *metteur-en-scene*. From opposite directions, they emerged with comparable status. Minnelli began and remained in the second circle as a stylist; Bunuel was an *auteur* even before he had assembled the technique of the first circle. Technique is simply the ability to put a film together with some clarity and coherence. Nowadays it is possible to become a director without knowing too much about the technical side, even the crucial functions of photography and editing. An expert production crew

could probably cover up for a chimpanzee in the director's chair. How do you tell the genuine director from the quasi-chimpanzee? After a given number of films, a pattern is established.

In fact, the *auteur* theory itself is a pattern theory in constant flux. I would never endorse a Ptolemaic constellation of directors in a fixed orbit. At the moment, my list of *auteurs* runs something like this through the first twenty: Ophuls, Renoir, Mizoguchi, Hitchcock, Chaplin, Ford, Welles, Dreyer, Rossellini, Murnau, Griffith, Sternberg, Eisenstein, Stroheim, Bunuel, Bresson, Hawks, Lang, Flaherty, Vigo. This list is somewhat weighted toward seniority and established reputations. In time, some of these *auteurs* will rise, some will fall, and some will be displaced by either new directors or rediscovered ancients. Again, the exact order is less important than the specific definitions of these and as many as two hundred other potential *auteurs*. I would hardly expect any other critic in the world to fully endorse this list, especially on faith. Only after thousands of films have been reevaluated, will any personal pantheon have a reasonably objective validity. The task of validating the *auteur* theory is an enormous one, and the end will never be in sight. Meanwhile, the *auteur* habit of collecting random films in directorial bundles will serve posterity with at least a tentative classification.

Although the *auteur* theory emphasizes the body of a director's work rather than isolated masterpieces, it is expected of great directors that they make great films every so often. The only possible exception to this rule I can think of is Abel Gance, whose greatness is largely a function of his aspiration. Even with Gance, *La Roue* is as close to being a great film as any single work of Flaherty's. Not that single works matter that much. As Renoir has observed, a director spends his life on variations of the same film.

Two recent omnibus films — *Boccaccio 70* and *The Seven Capital Sins* — unwittingly reinforced the *auteur* theory by confirming the relative standing of the many directors involved. If I had not seen either film, I would have anticipated that the order of merit in *Boccaccio 70* would be Visconti, Fellini and De Sica, and in *The Seven Capital Sins*, Godard, Chabrol, Demy, Vadim, De Broca, Molinaro. (Dhomme, Ionesco's stage director and an unknown quantity in advance, turned out to be the worst of the lot.) There might be some argument about the relative badness of De Broca and Molinaro, but other-

wise, the directors ran true to form by almost any objective criterion of value. However, the main point here is that even in these frothy, ultra-commercial servings of entertainment, the contribution of each director had less in common stylistically with the work of other directors on the project than with his own previous work.

Sometimes a great deal of corn must be husked to yield a few kernels of internal meaning. I recently saw *Every Night at Eight*, one of the many maddeningly routine films Raoul Walsh has directed in his long career. This 1935 effort featured George Raft, Alice Faye, Frances Langford and Patsy Kelly in one of those familiar plots about radio shows of the period. The film keeps moving along in the pleasantly unpretentious manner one would expect of Walsh until one incongruously intense scene with George Raft thrashing about in his sleep, revealing his inner fears in mumbling dream talk. The girl he loves comes into the room in the midst of his unconscious avowals of feeling, and listens sympathetically. This unusual scene was later amplified in *High Sierra* with Humphrey Bogart and Ida Lupino. The point is that one of the screen's most virile directors employed an essentially feminine narrative device to dramatize the emotional vulnerability of his heroes. If I had not been aware of Walsh in *Every Night at Eight*, the crucial link to *High Sierra* would have passed unnoticed. Such are the joys of the *auteur* theory.

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WHITE ELEPHANT ART VERSUS TERMITE ART

by Manny Farber

MOST of the feckless, listless quality of today's art can be blamed on its drive to break out of a tradition while, irrationally, hewing to the square, boxed-in shape and gem-like inertia of an old, densely wrought European masterpiece.

Advanced painting has long been suffering from this burnt out notion of a masterpiece — breaking away from its imprisoning conditions towards a suicidal improvisation, threatening to move nowhere and everywhere, niggling, omnivorous, ambitionless; yet, within the same picture, paying strict obeissance to the canvas edge and, without favoritism, the precious nature of every inch of allowable space. A classic example of this inertia is the Cezanne painting: in his in-doorish works of the woods around Aux de Provence, a few spots of tingling, jarring excitement occur where he nibbles away at what he calls his "small sensation," the shifting of a tree trunk, the infinitesimal contests of complimentary colors in a light accent on farmhouse wall. The rest of each canvas is a clogging weight-density-structure-polish amalgam associated with self-aggrandizing masterwork. As he moves away from the unique, personal vision that interests him, his painting turns ungiving and puzzling: a matter of balancing curves for his bunched-in composition, laminating the color, working the painting out to the edge. Cezanne ironically left an exposé of his dreary finishing work in terrifyingly honest watercolors, an occasional unfinished oil (the pinkish portrait of his wife in sunny, leafed-in patio), where he foregoes everything but his spotting fascination with minute interactions.

The idea of art as an expensive hunk of well-regulated area, both logical and magical, sits heavily over the talent of every modern painter, from Motherwell to Andy Warhol. The private voice of Motherwell (the exciting drama in the meeting places between ambivalent shapes, the aromatic sensuality that comes from laying down thin sheets of cold, artfully cliché-ish, hedonistic color) is inevitably ruined by having to spread these small pleasures into great, contained works. Thrown back constantly on unrewarding endeavors (filling vast egg-like shapes, organizing a ten-foot rectangle with its empty corners suggest-

ing Siberian steppes in the coldest time of the year), Motherwell ends up with appalling amounts of plasterish grandeur, a composition so huge and questionably painted that the delicate, electric contours seem to be crushing the shale-like matter inside. The special delight of each painting tycoon (DeKooning's sabre-like lancing of forms; Warhol's minute embrace with the path of illustrator's pen line and block print tone; James Dine's slog-footed brio, filling a stylized shape from stem to stern with one ungiving color) is usually squandered in pursuit of the continuity, harmony, involved in constructing a masterpiece. The painting, sculpture, assemblage becomes a yawning production of over-ripe technique shrieking with preciousness, fame, ambition; far inside are tiny pillows holding up the artist's signature, now turned into a mannerism by the padding, lechery, faking required to combine today's esthetics with the components of traditional Great Art.

Movies have always been suspiciously addicted to termite art tendencies. Good work usually arises where the creators (Laurel and Hardy, the team of Howard Hawks and William Faulkner operating on the first half of Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*) seem to have no ambitions towards gilt culture, but are involved in a kind of squandering-beaverish endeavor that isn't anywhere or for anything. A peculiar fact about termite-tapeworm-fungus-moss art is that it goes always forward eating its own boundaries, and, likely as not, leaves nothing in its path other than the signs of eager, industrious, unkempt activity.

The most inclusive description of the art is, that, termite-like, it feels its way through walls of particularization, with no sign that the artist has any object in mind other than eating away the immediate boundaries of his art, and turning these boundaries into conditions of the next achievement. Laurel and Hardy, in fact, in some of their most dyspeptic, and funniest movies, like *Hog Wild*, contributed some fine parody of men who had read every "How to Succeed" book available; but, when it came to applying their knowledge, reverted instinctively to termite behavior.

One of the good termite performances (John Wayne's bemused cowboy in an unreal stage town inhabited by pallid repetitious actors whose

chief trait is a powdered makeup) occurs in John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. Better Ford films than this have been marred by a phlegmatically solemn Irish personality that goes for rounded declamatory acting, silhouetted riders along the rim of a mountain with a golden sunset behind them, and repetitions in which big bodies are scrambled together in a rhythmically curving Rosa Bonheur-ish composition. Wayne's acting is infected by a kind of hobo-ish spirit, sitting back on its haunches doing a bitter-amused counterpoint to the pale, neutral film life around him. In an Arizona town that is too placid, where the cactus was planted last night and nostalgically cast actors do a generalized drunkenness, cowardice, voraciousness, Wayne is the termite actor focussing only on a tiny present area, nibbling at it with engaging professionalism and a hipster sense of how to sit in a chair leaned against the wall, eye a flogging over-actor (Lee Marvin). As he moves along at the pace of a tapeworm, Wayne leaves a path that is only bits of shrewd intramural acting — a craggy face filled with bitterness, jealousy, a big body that idles luxuriantly, having long grown tired with roughhouse games played by old wrangler types like John Ford.

The best examples of termite art appear in places other than films, where the spotlight of culture is nowhere in evidence, so that the craftsman can be ornery, wasteful, stubbornly self-involved, doing go-for-broke art and not caring what comes of it. The occasional newspaper column by a hard work specialist caught up by an exciting event (Joe Alsop or Ted Lewis, during a presidential election), or a fireball technician re-awakened during a pennant playoff that brings on stage his favorite villains (Dick Young); the TV production of "The Iceman Cometh," with its great examples of slothful-buzzing acting by Myron McCormack, Jason Robards, et al; the last few detective novels of Ross Macdonald and most of Raymond Chandler's ant-crawling verbosity and sober fact-pointing in the letters compiled years back in a slightly noticed book that is a fine running example of popular criticism; the TV debating of William Buckley, before he relinquished his tangential, counterattacking skill and took to flying into propeller blades of issues, like James Meredith Ole Miss-adventures.

In movies, non-termite art is too much in command of writers and directors to permit the omnivorous termite artist to scuttle along for more

than a few scenes. Even Wayne's cowboy job peters out in a gun duel that is overwrought with conflicting camera angles, plays of light and dark, ritualized movement and posture. In *The Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner*, the writer (Alan Sillitoe) feels the fragments of a delinquent's career have to be united in a conventional story. The design on which Sillitoe settles — a spoke-like affair with each fragment shown as a memory experienced on practice runs — leads to repetitious scenes of a boy running. Even a gaudily individual track star — a Peter Snell — would have trouble making these practice runs worth the moviegoer's time, though a cheap ton of pseudo-Bunny Berigan jazz trumpet is thrown on the film's soundtrack to hop up the neutral dullness of these up-down-around spins through vibrant English countryside.

Masterpiece art, reminiscent of the enameled tobacco humidors and wooden lawn ponies bought at white elephant auctions decades ago, has come to dominate the over-populated arts of TV and movies. The three sins of white elephant art (1) frame the action with an all-over pattern, (2) install every event, character, situation in a frieze of continuities, and (3) treat every inch of the screen and film as a potential area for prizeworthy creativity. *Requiem for a Heavyweight* is so heavily inlaid with ravishing technique that only one scene — an employment office with a nearly illiterate fighter (Anthony Quinn) falling into the hands of an impossibly kind job clerk — can be acted by Quinn's slag blanket type of expendable art which crawls along using fair insight and a total immersion in the materials of acting. Antonioni's *La Notte* is a good example of the evils of continuity, from its opening scene of a deathly sick noble critic being visited by two dear friends. The scene gets off well but the director carries the thread of it to agonizing length, embarrassing the viewer with dialogue about art that is sophomorically one-dimensional, interweaving an arty shot of a helicopter to fill the time interval, continuing with impossible-to-act effects of sadness by Moreau and Mastroianni outside the hospital, and, finally, reels later, a laughable postscript conversation by Moreau-Mastroianni detailing the critic's "meaning" as a friend, as well as a few other very mystifying details about the poor bloke. Tony Richardson's films, beloved by art theatre patrons are surpassing examples of the sin of framing, boxing

in an action with a noble idea or camera effect picked from High Art.

In Richardson's films (*Taste of Honey*; *The Long Distance Runner*), a natural directing touch on domesticity involving losers is the main dish (even the air in Richardson's white-ish rooms seems to be fighting the ragamuffin type who infests Richardson's young or old characters). With his "warm" liking for the materials of direction, a patient staying with confusion, holding to a cop's leadfooted pacelessness that doesn't crawl over details so much as back sluggishly into them, Richardson can stage his remarkable seconds-ticking sedentary act in almost any set-up — at night, in front of a glareey department store window, or in a train coach with two pairs of kid lovers settling in with surprising, hopped-up animalism. Richardson's ability to give a spectator the feeling of being There, with time to spend, arrives at its peak in homes, apartments, art garrets, a stable-like apartment, where he turns into an academic neighbor of Walker Evans, steering the spectator's eyes on hidden rails, into arm patterns, worn wood, inclement feeling hovering in tiny marble eyes, occasionally even making a room appear to take shape as he introduces it to a puffy-faced detective or an expectant girl on her first search for a room of her own. In a kitchen scene with kid thief and job-worn detective irritably gnawing at each other, Richardson's talent for angular disclosures takes the scene apart without pointing or a nearly habitual underlining; nagging through various types of bone-worn, dishrag gray material with a fine windup of two unlikable opponents still scraping at each other in a situation that is one of the first to credibly turn the over-attempted movie act — showing hard, agonizing existence in the wettest rain and slush.

Richardson's ability with deeply lived in incident is, nevertheless, invariably dovetailed with his trick of settling a horse-collar of gentility around the neck of a scene, giving the image a pattern that suggests practice, skill, guaranteed safe humor. His highly rated stars (from Richard Burton through Tom Courtenay) fall into mock emotion and studied turns which suggest they are caught up in the enameled sequence of a vaudeville act: Rita Tushingham's sighting over a gun barrel at an amusement park (standard movie place for displaying types who are closer to the plow than the library card) does a broadly familiar comic arrangement of jaw muscle and eye

brow that has the gaiety and almost the size of a dinosaur bone. Another gentility Richardson picked up from fine objets d'art (Dubuffet, Larry Rivers, Dick Tracy's creator) consists of setting a network of marring effects to prove his people are ill-placed in life. Tom Courtenay (the last angry boy in *Runner*) gets carried away by this cult belittling, elongating, turning himself into a dervish with a case of St. Vitus dance which localizes in his jaw muscles, eye lids. As Richardson gilds his near vagrants with sawtooth mop coiffeurs and a way of walking on high heels so that each heel seems a different size and both to be plunged through the worn flooring, the traits look increasingly elegant and put-on (the worst traits: angry eyes that suggest the empty orbs in "Orphan Annie" comic strips). Most of his actors become crashing unbelievable bores, though there is one nearly likable actor, a chubby Dreiserian girl friend in *Long Distance Runner* who, termite fashion, almost acts into a state of grace. Package artist Richardson has other boxing-in ploys, running scenes together as Beautiful Travologue, placing a cosmic symbol around the cross-country running event, which incidentally crushes Michael Redgrave, a headmaster in the fantastic gambol of throwing an entire Borstal community into a swivet over one track event.

The common denominator of these laborious ploys is, actually, the need of the director, writer to overfamiliarize the audience with the picture it's watching: to blow up every situation and character like an affable innertube with recognizable details and smarmy compassion. Actually, this over-familiarization serves to reconcile those supposed longtime enemies — academic and Madison Avenue art.

An exemplar of white elephant art, particularly the critic-devouring virtue of filling every pore of a work with glinting, darting Style and creative Vivacity, is François Truffaut. Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player* and *Jules and Jim*, two ratchety perpetual motion machines devised by a French Rube Goldberg, leave behind the more obvious gadgetries of *Requiem for a Heavyweight* and even the cleaner, bladelikey journalism of *The 400 Blows*.

Truffaut's concealed message, given away in his Henry Miller-ish, adolescent two reeler of kids spying on a pair of lovers (one unforgettably daring image: kids sniffing the bicycle seat just vacated by the girl in the typical fashion of voyeuristic pornographic art) is a kind of re-

versal of growth in which people grow backwards into childhood. Suicide becomes a game, the houses look like toy boxes, — laughter, death, putting out a fire — all seem reduced to some unreal innocence of childhood myths. The real innocence of *Jules and Jim* is in the writing, which depends on the spectator sharing the same wide-eyed or adolescent view of the wickedness of sex that is implicit in the vicious gamesmanship going on between two men and a girl.

Truffaut's stories (all women are villains; the schoolteacher seen through the eyes of a sniveling schoolboy; all heroes are unbelievably innocent, unbelievably persecuted) and characters convey the sense of being attached to a rubber band, although he makes a feint at reproducing the films of the 1930s with their linear freedom and independent veering. From *The 400 Blows* onward, his films are bound in and embarrassed by his having made up his mind what the film is to be about. This decisiveness coverts the people and incidents into flat, jiggling mannikins (*400 Blows*, *Mischief Makers*) in a Mickey Mouse comic book which is animated by thumbing the pages rapidly. This approach eliminates any stress or challenge, most of all any sense of the film locating an independent shape.

Jules and Jim, the one Truffaut film that seems held down to a gliding motion, is also cartoon-like but in a decorous, suspended way. Again most of the visual effect is an illustration for the current of the sentimental narrative. Truffaut's concentration on making his movie fluent and comprehensible flattens out all complexity and reduces his scenes to scraps of pornography — like someone quoting just the punchline of a well-known dirty joke. So unmotivated is the leapfrogging around beds of the threeway lovers that it leads to endless bits of burlesque. Why does she suddenly pull a gun? (See "villainy of women" above). Why does she drive her car off a bridge? (Villains need to be punished) etc.

Jules and Jim seems to have been shot through a scrim which has filtered out everything except Truffaut's dry vivacity with dialogue and his diminutive stippling sensibility. Probably the high point in this love-is-time's-fool film: a languorous afternoon in a chalet (what's become of chalets) with Jeanne Moreau teasing her three lovers with an endless folksong. Truffaut's lyrics — a patter of vivacious small talk that is supposed to exhibit the writer's sophistication, never mind what — provides most of the scene's friction,

along with an idiot concentration on meaningless details of faces or even furniture (the degree that a rocking chair isn't rocking becomes an impressive substitute for psychology). The point is that divested of this meaningless vivacity the scenes themselves are without tension: dramatic or psychological.

The boredom aroused by Truffaut — to say nothing of the irritation — comes from his peculiar methods of dehydrating all the life out of his scenes (Instant movies?). Thanks to his fondness for doused lighting and for the kind of long shots which hold his actors at 30 paces, especially in bad weather, it's not only the people who are blanked out; the scene itself threatens to evaporate off the edge of the screen. Adding to the effect of evaporation, disappearing: Truffaut's imagery is limited to traveling (running through meadows, walking in Paris streets, etc.) set-ups and dialogue scenes where the voices, disembodied and like the freakish chirps in Mel Blanc's *Porky Pig* cartoons, take care of the flying out effect. Truffaut's system holds art at a distance without any actual muscularity or propulsion to peg the film down. As the spectator leans forward to grab the film, it disappears like a released kite.

Antonioni's specialty, the effect of moving as in a chess game becomes an autocratic kind of direction that robs an actor of his motive powers and most of his spine. A documentarist at heart and one who often suggests both Paul Klee and the cool, deftly neat, "intellectual" Fred Zinnemann in his early *Act of Violence* phase, Antonioni gets his odd, clarity-is-all effects from his taste for chic mannerist art that results in a screen that is glassy, has a side sliding motion, the feeling of people plastered against stripes or divided by verticals and horizontals; his incapacity with interpersonal relationships turns crowds into stiff waves, lovers into lonely appendages, hanging stiffly from each other, occasionally coming together like clanking sheets of metal but seldom giving the effect of being in communion.

At his best, he turns this mental creeping into an effect of modern misery, loneliness, cavernous guilt-ridden yearning. It often seems details, a gesture, the ironic wife pointing the path of a thought as it circles toward her brain, become corroded by solitariness. A pop jazz band appearing at a millionaire's fete becomes the unintentional heart of *La Notte*, pulling together the inchoate center of the film, — a vast endless party.

Antonioni handles this combo as though it were a vile mess dumped on the lawn of a huge estate. He has his film inhale and exhale, returning for a glimpse of the four-piece outfit playing the same unmodified kitsch music — stupidly immobile, totally detached from the party swimming around the music. The film's most affecting shot is one of Jeanne Moreau making tentative stabs with her sombre, alienated eyes and mouth, a bit of a dance step, at rapport and friendship with the musicians. Moreau's facial mask, a signature worn by all Antonioni players, seems about to crack from so much sudden uninhibited effort.

The common quality or defect which unites apparently divergent artists like Antonioni, Truffaut, Richardson, is fear, a fear of the potential life, rudeness, and outrageousness of a film. Coupled with their storage vault of self awareness and knowledge of film history, this fear produces an incessant wakefulness. In Truffaut's films, this wakefulness shows up as dry, fluttering inanity. In Antonioni's films, the mica schist appearance of the movies, their linear patterns, are hulked into obscurity by Antonioni's own fund of sentimentalism, the need to get a mural-like thinness and interminableness out of his mean patterns.

The absurdity of *La Notte* and *L'Avventura* is that its director is an authentically interesting oddball who doesn't recognize the fact. His talent is for small eccentric microscope studies, like Paul Klee's, of people and things pinned in their grotesquerie to an oppressive social backdrop. Unlike Klee, who stayed small and thus almost evaded affectation, Antonioni's aspiration is to pin the viewer to the wall and slug him with wet towels of artiness and significance. At one point in *La Notte*, the unhappy wife, taking the director's patented walk through a continent of scenery, stops in a rubble section to peel a large piece of rusted tin. This ikon close-up of minuscule desolation is probably the most overworked cliché in still photography, but Antonioni, to keep his stories, events moving like great novels through significant material, never stops throwing his Sunday punch. There is an interestingly acted nymphomaniac girl at wit's end trying to rape the dishrag hero; this is a big event, particularly for the first five minutes of a film. Antonioni overweights this terrorized girl and her interesting mop of straggly hair by pinning her into a typical bandaid composition —

the girl, like a tiny tormented animal, backed against a large horizontal stripe of white wall. It is a pretentiously handsome image that compromises the harrowing effect of the scene.

Whatever the professed theme in these films, the one that dominates in unspoken thought is that the film business is finished with museum art or pastiche art. The best evidence of this disenchantment is the anachronistic slackness of *Jules and Jim*, *Billy Budd*, *Two Weeks in Another Town*. They seem to have been dropped into the present from a past which has become useless. This chasm between white elephant reflexes and termite performances shows itself in an inertia and tight defensiveness which informs the acting of Mickey Rooney in *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, Julie Harris in the same film, and the spiritless survey of a deserted church in *L'Avventura*. Such scenes and actors seem as numb and uninspired by the emotions they are supposed to animate, as hoboes trying to draw warmth from an antiquated coal stove. This chasm of inertia seems to testify that the Past of heavily insured, enclosed film art, has become unintelligible to contemporary performers, even including those who lived through its period of relevance.

Citizen Kane, in 1941, antedated by several years a crucial change in films from the old flowing naturalistic story, bringing in an iceberg film of hidden meanings ("one tenth image, 'insights' a la Freud, or Jung, Marx or Lerner, Sartre or Saroyan, Frost, Dewey, Auden, Mann, or whoever else the producer's been reading"). Now the revolution wrought by the exciting but hammy Orson Welles film, reaching its zenith in the Fifties, has run its course and been superseded by a new film technique that turns up like an ugly shrub even in the midst of films that are preponderantly old gems. **Oddly enough the film** that starts the breaking away is a middle-1950s film, that seems on the surface to be as traditional as *Greed*. Kurosawa's on modest film, *Ikiru* is a giveaway landmark, suggesting a new self-centering approach. It sums up much of what a termite art aims at: bug-like immersion in a small area without point or aim; and, over all, concentration on nailing down one moment without glamorizing it, but forgetting this accomplishment as soon as it has been passed; the feeling that all is expendable, that it can be chopped up and flung down in a different arrangement without ruin.

SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER

by Pauline Kael

The cover of David Goodis' novel *Down There*, now issued by Grove Press under the title of the film adapted from it, *Shoot the Piano Player*, carries a statement from Henry Miller—"Truffaut's film was so good I had doubts the book could equal it. I have just read the novel and I think it is even better than the film." I don't agree with Miller's judgment. I like the David Goodis book, but it's strictly a work in a limited genre, well-done and consistent; Truffaut's film busts out all over—and that's what's wonderful about it. The film is comedy, pathos, tragedy all scrambled up—much I think as most of us really experience them (surely all our lives are filled with comic horrors) but not as we have been led to expect them in films.

Shoot the Piano Player is about a man who has withdrawn from human experience; he wants not to care anymore, not to get involved, not to *feel*. He has reduced life to a level on which he can cope with it—a reverie between him and the piano. Everything that happens outside his solitary life seems erratic, accidental, unpredictable—but he can predict the pain. In a flashback we see why: when he *did* care, he failed the wife who needed him and caused her death. In the course of the film he is once more brought back into the arena of human contacts; another girl is destroyed, and he withdraws again into solitude.

Truffaut is a free and inventive director—and he fills the piano player's encounters with the world with good and bad jokes, bits from old Sacha Guitry films, clowns and thugs, tough kids, songs and fantasy and snow scenes, and homage to the American gangster films—not the classics, the socially conscious big-studio gangster films of the thirties, but the grade-B gangster films of the 40's and 50's. Like Godard, who dedicated *Breathless* to Monogram Pictures, Truffaut is young, and he loves the cheap American gangster films of his childhood and youth. And like them, *Shoot the Piano Player* was made on a small budget. It was also made outside of studios with a crew that, according to witnesses, sometimes consisted of Truffaut, the actors, and a cameraman. Part of his

love of cheap American movies with their dream imagery of the American gangster, the modern fairy tales for European children who go to movies, is no doubt reflected in his taking an American underworld novel and transferring its setting from Philadelphia to France.

Charles Aznavour who plays the hero is a popular singer turned actor—rather like Frank Sinatra in this country, and like Sinatra, he is an instinctive actor and a great camera subject. Aznavour's piano player is like a tragic embodiment of Robert Hutchins' Zuckerkandl philosophy (whatever it is, stay out of it): he is the thinnest-skinned of modern heroes. It is his own capacity to feel that makes him cut himself off: he experiences so sensitively and so acutely that he can't bear the suffering of it—he thinks that if he doesn't do anything he won't feel and he won't cause suffering to others. The girl, Marie Dubois—later the smoky-steam-engine girl of *Jules and Jim*—is like a Hollywood 40's movie type; she would have played well with Humphrey Bogart—a big, clear-eyed, crude, loyal, honest girl. The film is closely related to Godard's *Breathless*; and both seem to be haunted by the shade of Bogart.

Shoot the Piano Player is both nihilistic in attitude and, at the same time, in its wit and good spirits, totally involved in life and fun. Whatever Truffaut touches, seems to leap to life—even a gangster thriller is transformed by the wonder of the human comedy. A *comedy* about melancholia, about the hopelessness of life can only give the lie to the theme; for as long as we can joke, life is not hopeless, we can enjoy it. In Truffaut's style there is so much pleasure in life that the wry, lonely little piano player, the sardonic little man who shrugs off experience, is himself a beautiful character. This beauty is a tribute to human experience, even if the man is so hurt and defeated that he can only negate experience. The nihilism of the character—and the anarchic nihilism of the director's style—have led reviewers to call the film a surrealist farce; it isn't that strange.

When I refer to Truffaut's style as anarchic and nihilistic, I am referring to a *style*, not

an absence of it. I disagree with the critics around the country who find the film disorganized; they seem to cling to the critical apparatus of their grammar school teachers. They want unity of theme, easy-to-follow-transitions in mood, a good, coherent, old-fashioned plot, and heroes they can identify with and villains they can reject. Stanley Kauffmann in *The New Republic* compares *Shoot the Piano Player* with the sweepings of cutting room floors; *Time* decides that "the moral, if any, seems to be that shooting the piano player might, at least, put the poor devil out of his misery". But who but *Time* is looking for morals? What's exciting about movies like *Shoot the Piano Player*, *Breathless* (and also the superb *Jules and Jim*, though it's very different from the other two) is that they, quite literally, move with the times. They are full of unresolved, inexplicable, disharmonious elements, irony and slapstick and defeat all compounded—not arbitrarily as the reviewers claim—but in terms of the film-maker's efforts to find some expression for his own anarchic experience, instead of making more of those tiresome well-made movies that no longer mean much to us.

The subject matter of *Shoot the Piano Player*, as of *Breathless*, seems small and unimportant compared to the big themes of so many films, but it only *seems* small: it is an effort to deal with contemporary experience in terms drawn out of that experience. For both Godard and Truffaut a good part of this experience has been movie-going, but this is just as much a part of their lives as reading is for a writer. And what writer does not draw upon what he has read?

A number of reviewers have complained that in his improvisatory method, Truffaut includes irrelevancies, and they use as chief illustration the opening scene—a gangster who is running away from pursuers bangs into a telephone pole, and then is helped to his feet by a man who proceeds to walk along with him, while discussing his marital life. Is it really so irrelevant? Only if you grew up in that tradition of the well-made play in which this bystander would have to reappear as some vital link in the plot. But he's relevant in a different way here: he helps to set us in a world in which his seminormal existence seems just as much a matter of chance and fringe behavior and simplicity as the gangster's existence—which begins to seem seminormal also. The by-

stander talks; we get an impression of his way of life and his need to communicate, and he goes out of the film, and that is that. Truffaut would have to be as stodgy and dull-witted as the reviewers to bring him back and link him into the story. For the meaning of these films is that these fortuitous encounters illuminate something about our lives in a way that the old neat plots don't.

There is a tension in the method; we never quite know where we are, how we are supposed to react—and this tension, as the moods change and we are pulled in different ways, gives us the excitement of drama, of art, of our life. Nothing is clear-cut, the ironies criss-cross and bounce. The loyal, courageous heroine is so determined to live by her code that when it's violated, she comes on, too strong, and the piano-player is repelled, by her inability to respect the weaknesses of others. Thugs kidnapping a little boy discuss their possessions with him—a conversation worthy of a footnote in Veblen's passages on conspicuous expenditure.

Only a really carefree, sophisticated film-maker could bring it off—and satisfy our desire for the unexpected that is also *right*. Truffaut is a director of incredible taste; he never carries a scene *too* far. It seems extraordinarily simple to complain that a virtuoso who can combine many moods, has not stuck to one familiar old mood—but this is what the reviews seem to amount to. The modern novel has abandoned the old conception that each piece must be in place—abandoned it so thoroughly that when we read something like Angus Wilson's *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* in which each piece does finally fit in place, we are astonished and amused at the dexterity of the accomplishment. That is the way Wilson works and it's wonderfully satisfying, but few modern novelists work that way—and it would be as irrelevant to the meaning and quality of, say, *Tropic of Capricorn* to complain that the plot isn't neatly tied together—like *Great Expectations*, as to complain of the film *Shoot the Piano Player* that it isn't neatly tied together like *The Bicycle Thief*. Dwight Macdonald wrote that *Shoot the Piano Player* deliberately mixed up "three genres which are usually kept apart; crime melodrama, romance, and slapstick comedy." And, he says, "I thought the mixture didn't jell, but it was an exhilarating try." What I think is exhilarating in *Shoot the Piano Player* is that it *doesn't* "jell" and that

the different elements keep us in a state of suspension—we react far more than we do to works that “jell.” Incidentally, it’s not completely accurate to say that these genres are usually kept apart: although *slapstick* rarely enters the mixture except in a far-out film like *Beat the Devil* or *Lovers and Thieves* or the new *The Manchurian Candidate*, there are numerous examples of crime melodrama-romance-comedy among well-known American films—particularly of the 40’s—for example *The Maltese Falcon*, *Casablanca*, *The Big Sleep*, *To Have and Have Not*. (Not all of Truffaut’s models are cheap B pictures.)

Perhaps one of the problems that American critics and audiences may have with *Shoot the Piano Player* is a peculiarly American element in it — the romantic treatment of the man who walks alone. For decades our films were full of these gangsters, outcasts, detectives, cynics; Bogart epitomized them all—all the men who had been hurt by a woman or betrayed by their friends and who no longer trusted anybody. And although I think most of us enjoyed this romantic treatment of the man beyond the law, we rejected it intellectually. It was part of hack movie-making—we might love it but it wasn’t really intellectually respectable. And now here it is, inspired by our movies, and coming back to us via France. The heroine of *Shoot the Piano Player* says of the hero, “Even when he’s with somebody, he walks alone.” But this French hero carries his isolation much farther than the earlier American hero: when his girl is having a fight on his behalf and he is impelled to intervene, he says to himself, “You’re out of it. Let them fight it out.” He is brought into it; but where the American hero, once impelled to move, is a changed man and, redeemed by love or patriotism or a sense of fair play, he would take the initiative, save his girl, and conquer over everything, this French hero simply moves into the situation when he must, when he can no longer stay out of it, and takes the consequences. He finds that the contact with people is once again defeating. He really doesn’t believe in anything; the American hero only *pretended* he didn’t.

Breathless was about active, thoughtless young people; *Shoot the Piano Player* is about a passive, melancholic character who is acted upon. Yet the world that surrounds the principal figures in these two movies is similar: the clowns in one are police, in the

other gangsters, but this hardly matters. What we react to in both is the world of absurdities that is so much like our own world in which people suddenly and unexpectedly turn into clowns. But at the center is the sentimentalist—Belmondo in *Breathless*, Aznavour here—and I think there can be no doubt that both Godard and Truffaut love their sentimental heroes.

There are incidentally a number of little in-group jokes included in the film; a few of these are of sufficiently general interest to be worth mentioning, and, according to Andrew Sarris, they have been verified by Truffaut. The piano player is given the name of Saroyan as a tribute to William Saroyan, particularly for his volume of stories *The Man on the Flying Trapeze*, and also because Charles Aznavour, like Saroyan, is Armenian (and, I would surmise, for the playful irony of giving a life-evading hero the name of one of the most rambunctious of life-embracing writers). One of the hero’s brothers in the film is named Chico, as a tribute to the Marx Brothers. And the impresario in the film, the major villain of the work, is called Lars Schmeel, as a disapproving gesture toward someone Truffaut does *not* admire—the impresario Lars Schmidt, known to us simply as Ingrid Bergman’s current husband, but apparently known to others—and disliked by Truffaut—for his theatrical activities in Paris.

If a more pretentious vocabulary or a philosophic explanation will help: the piano player is intensely human and sympathetic, a character who empathizes with others, and with whom, we as audience, empathize; but he does not want to accept the responsibilities of his humanity—he asks only to be left alone. And because he refuses voluntary involvement, he is at the mercy of accidental forces. He is, finally, man trying to preserve his little bit of humanity in a chaotic world—it is not merely a world he never made but a world he would much rather forget about. But schizophrenia cannot be willed and so long as he is sane, he is only partly successful: crazy accidents happen—and sometimes he must deal with them. That is to say, no matter how far he retreats from life, he is not completely safe. And Truffaut himself is so completely engaged in life that he pleads for the piano player’s right to be left alone, to live in his withdrawn state, *to be out of it*. Truffaut’s plea is, of course, “Don’t shoot the piano player.”

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT BREER

by Guy L. Coté

Robert Breer was born in Detroit in 1926. From 1943 to 1946, he studied art at Stanford University in California and won its annual painting prize in 1949. That year, he left for Europe, settled in Paris and for the next ten years participated in group and one-man shows in France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, England, U.S. and Cuba. Since 1959, he has been living in Palisades, N.Y., and now devotes most of his time to making films. His work has received awards from the Creative Film Foundation and the Bergamo Film Festival, and *A MAN AND HIS DOG OUT FOR AIR* ran for several months at the Carnegie Cinema, New York, with Resnais' *L'ANNEE DERNIERE A MARIENBAD*. The following interview was recorded during the 1962 Montreal International Film Festival, and is published here with acknowledgments to "Objectif," the Montreal critical review where it first appeared.

COTE: How did you get involved with films in the first place?

BREER: First, I was a painter. In Paris, I was influenced by the geometric abstractions of the neo-plasticians, following Mondrian and Kandinsky. It was big at the time, and I began painting that way. My canvasses were limited to three or four forms, each one hard-edged and having its own definite color. It was a rather severe kind of abstraction, but already in certain ways I had begun to give my work a dynamic element which showed that I was not entirely at home within the strict limits of neo-plasticism. Also, the notion of absolute formal values seemed at odds with the number of variations I could develop around a single theme and I became interested in change itself and finally in cinema as a means of exploring this further. I wanted to see if I could positively control a range of variations in a single composition. You can see that I sort of backed into cinema since my main concern was with static forms. In fact, I was even a bit annoyed at first when I ran into problems of movement.

My father was an amateur movie-maker from way back; he had even made a stereoscopic camera in the 1940's. I borrowed one of his cameras to film my first tests: a set of cards showing the transformations of forms through various phases.

That was in 1952, and I called the film *Form Phases*. For a long time, the films remained incidental to my painting, but I remember a show in Brussels in 1956, at the Palais des Beaux Arts, where the films were received much better than the paintings. They organized a showing of *Form Phases IV* at the cine-club, along with Murnau's *Sunrise*, and I remember feeling a sort of excitement about the dramatic situation of presenting my work to an audience. It's very different from an art show: you never really know if you're making contact with people during an exhibition of paintings.

During that period, I began to consider the problems of free forms floating around. I'd rejected this earlier, trying to get some kind of plastic absolute. That's what had bothered me with the neo-plastic approach to things. In Mondrian, for example, the final absolute is verticals and horizontals. There's no way out, really, and I couldn't accept that. The neo-plasticians said that red was red, that it had a certain wave-length and was meant to be absorbed as a pure sensation. Likewise, blue was blue, and equally a pure sensation. And the two together made for a certain relationship which itself should remain pure. The neo-plasticians felt that the essence of art was in these relationships, and that they had to stay strictly within their own limitations and not take on any other meanings.

COTE: Well, you've evolved considerably from that position since then.

BREER: Yes, films have completely liberated me in various ways. You can see it in the subject-matter I have treated in my films. The Pope film, for example (*A Miracle*), is a sort of Kafka-like metamorphosis of a human being. Now, I feel that the color red can't be just the color red and have no other meaning. The consecutive fact of film allows for everything! You can mix up symbols and conventions: a red can be a red, or it can be blood, or it can be confused. We deal with metaphors in our experience, and the words we use can have emotional qualities. So can colors and forms. In a sense, I don't entirely believe in abstract films, although I must say that people seem to read into *A Man And His Dog Out For Air* a lot more from its title than what I actually conceived when I made the images. I can describe it as a sort of stew:

once in a while something recognizable comes to the surface and disappears again. Finally at the end you see the man and his dog, and it's a kind of joke. The title and the bird songs make you expect to see the man and his dog, and it's the absurdity that makes audiences accept what is basically a free play of lines and pure rhythms.

COTE: You have said that your films are constructed like paintings. Is that not self-contradictory?

BREER: In the first place, my films are not literary. The only literature involved in *A Man And His Dog Out For Air* is its title. That's the whole scenario, and it's almost like the title of a painting which one puts on when the painting is finished. Then, *A Man And His Dog* is constructed from the middle towards both ends. I started with an image which evoked a feeling, and I expanded this feeling in several directions.

I work at a painting in very much the same way: you put down a color, which has a relationship to the canvas, and you put down another which alters the relationship, and so forth. The results of this way of working aren't exactly predictable, and in *A Man And His Dog*, for instance, there's a peculiar thing at the end which I don't understand but which obviously tickles the audience.

I don't think I could ever find the same spot again, at least not consciously.

I think of a film as a "space image" which is presented for a certain length of time. As with a painting, this image must submit to the subjective projection of the viewer and undergo a certain modification. Even a static painting has a certain time dimension, determined by the viewer to suit his needs and wishes. In film, this period of looking is determined by the artist and imposed on the spectator, his captive audience. A painting can be "taken in" immediately, that is, it is present in its total self at all time. My own approach to film is that of a painter — that is, I try to present the total image right away, and the images following are merely other aspects of and equivalent to the first and final image. Thus the whole work is constantly presented from beginning to end and, though in constant transformation, is at all times its total self. Obviously, then, there is no denouement, no gradual revelation except for the constantly changing aspects of the statement, in the same manner in which a painting is subjectively modified during viewing.

COTE: Are you not trying to say that cine-

matic form and abstract painting form are compatible?

BREER: No, I think they are *incompatible*, at least in my own work. What I've just said is a kind of subjective analysis of the creative processes which I am sometimes conscious of as I make my films. But it's clear to me that the language of painting and the language of cinema have little in common. In my canvasses, I used to make rectangles dance around, like ballet dancers, because of the strict relationships I imposed on them. But as soon as I put them in a fluid medium such as cinema and made them dance, my ballerinas became elephants! Not only that, but the camera had broken up the fixity of the relationships, there was no longer any need for rectangles as such, and I could change my forms completely. I started from scratch all over again.

The only thing I've carried directly from my painting days is a practical discipline which I have observed also in other artists who have transformed to films: that of working alone, at the artisan level. I almost *have* to work that way, and that's why I've had to invent my own shortcuts to making animated films, such as my flip-cards, which make it possible for me to see the action before I actually shoot it on the camera.

COTE: We speak of abstract films, and I can't help thinking of Norman McLaren's brand of abstract films. In a sense, they are not really abstract at all, because he often gives to non-objective shapes the semblance of human movement. He's an actor who creates shy lines and aggressive blobs, who imagines dynamic performances on the screen which mimic human drama.

BREER: I think that the reproduction of the semblance of natural movement is but one of the many possibilities of cinema. For me, the cinema medium is just an arbitrary thing which was invented that way to provide for the reproduction of natural movements. What I'm interested in is to attack the basic material, to tear up film, pick up the pieces and rearrange them. I'm interested in the domain between motion and still pictures. It seems to me that in animation, particularly, the search for the reproduction of natural movements plays far too big a role. Whether stylized or not, I don't think one *needs* to conceive of movements as related directly to those observed in reality. There's more to cinema than creating the illusion of psychologically anthropomorphic movements.

I would rather define a special approach to "abstraction in cinema" by using the word "unrelationship." The initial assumption in unrelationship is that literature is an over-refined and specialized means of expression with only incidental utility in the process of making continuous imagery, or "motion pictures." Words are sophisticated pictures used for the transmission of ideas; "unrelationship," itself a word, indicates a type of cinema built around the art of the non-rational, non-reasonable association of images. There can be no scenario for this type of film, but you must not confuse it with "abstract art"—which pretends to be a world of pure sensations, where red is red. In the new use of cinema, blood is red, and red is red, and the confusion is possible and right. The new imagery I speak of simultaneously appeals to all known and unknown levels of awareness, using the full range of stimuli from primary colors through pictograms to the written and spoken word. The nature of movie film permits the combination in concentrated form of great quantities of diverse materials and interpretations.

COTE: One comment heard about experimental films in general is that most of them fall into the category either of trying to reproduce on the screen the subjectivity of mental disorder, or else trying to induce in the audience a kind of mental disorder through the use of unrelated images. It has been said that although such attempts may be occasionally successful, they are a singularly fruitless and unrewarding form of artistic communication.

BREER: Well, the key word you use is disorder, by which I understand formlessness. There are many formless films which have no other purpose than to "épater les badauds," and I agree that these won't last. But you know very well that one cries disorder when one is unable to sense the real order, the aesthetic relationships which have in fact been put into the materials. I know it's not easy, but what I constantly try to do in my films is set up what is to be expected of them, even if this is the unexpected, so that audiences will know where they are. My films, if nothing else, are formal: they are concerned with overall form. There are some conventions normal to most films which don't apply in mine, and I've had to forcibly tell the audience that it shouldn't expect the normal notions of continuity. I'm very much concerned with a new kind of continuity; even if it's anti-continuity, it still has a

form. Take *Blazes*, for instance. It's a film where notions of continuity are shattered. The succession of abstract pictures follow so quickly and are so different from one to the next that one doesn't accurately see any one picture, but has the impression of thousands. It's a form of visual orgasm. I put the spectator off the track to such a point that he becomes passive and forgets notions of continuity. He can no longer anticipate the images and is too bombarded to remember the past images. He is forced to just sit there and take the thing in as an actuality: the violence is just a by-product.

Actually, any disruption of normal thought patterns is bound to have an effect, and people often will call that "disorder." Some people stalk out of my films, and are angered. I'd like to think that out of that reaction, people will eventually be brought to see the films as I see them.

COTE: But what about boredom? What about the people that are bored by your films?

BREER: Ah, boredom. I'm against boredom. I can work with outrage, but I'm sorry to have to bore anyone. If I had to choose, I'd much rather anger them, though I should say that the eventual goal is pleasure, viz. joy,

FILMOGRAPHY OF ROBERT BREER

- 1952 *Form Phases I* (2 min., B&W, silent). Evolution of abstract forms in space.
- 1953 *Form Phases II & III* (7½ min., Kodachrome, silent). Collage, drips, washes, and lines.
- 1954 *Form Phases IV* (4 min., Kodachrome, silent). Movement becomes integral part of the total composition.
- Image by Images I* (Kodachrome, silent). Endless loop made up entirely of disparate images.
- Un Miracle* (30 seconds, Kodachrome, silent). In collaboration with Pontus Hulten — animated news photo in a satire of the Vatican.
- 1955 *Image by Images II & III* (7 min., B&W, silent). Simplified forms and attenuated movement.
- 1956 *Image by Images IV* (3 min., Kodachrome, sound). A suite of disparate images repeated several times with variations.
- Motion Pictures* (3 min., Kodachrome sound). Evolution of forms derived from the author's paintings.

- Cats* (2 min., Kodachrome; sound by Frances Breer). Mixture of figurative and non-figurative elements.
- 1956-7 *Recreation I* (2 min. Kodachrome, spoken text by Noel Burch). Frame by frame rupture of continuity in follow-up of endless loop, *Image by Images I*. *Recreation II* (1½ min., Kodachrome, silent). Attempt to formalize frame by frame disparity.
- 1957 *Jamestown Baloos* (6 min., B&W & color, sound & silent). A synthesis of all the preceding techniques. In three parts. *A Man And His Dog Out For Air* (3 min., B&W, sound). Line and drawings in constant evolution.
- 1958-9 *Eyewash* (3 min., color, silent). Abstract animation and live photography. Prints

- in Ektachrome are individually hand-colored as well.
- 1960 *Homage to Jean Tinguely's Homage To New York* (11 min., B&W, sound). A subjective account of the construction and eventual destruction of Tinguely's self-destroying machine.
- 1960 *Inner and Outer Space* (5 min., color, sound). Animation connecting kinesthetic space with outer space.
- 1961 *Blazes* (3 min., color, sound). Frame by frame reordering of 100 basic images.
- 1962 *Horse Over Tea Kettle* (7 min., color, sound). Animated cartoon.
- Pat's Birthday* (23 min., B&W, sound). Live action fantasy in collaboration with Claes Oldenburg.

THE GOLDEN POET

by Gregory Markopoulos

ON JULY 8th, 1962 Ron Rice was awarded the *Film-makers' Festival Award* for his experimental film, *Senseless*, at the Charles Theatre. Ron Rice has had the privilege of working in the medium of film; he has not failed the film spectator in being true to the medium of film. In great part, he has dared to penetrate time, and he has succeeded in destroying time through the eternity that only the art of film possesses. The sweet fictions of contemporary films, telling a story or pretending to documentary styles (I've never seen a documentary nor do I ever hope to see one.)* are shadowed by Ron Rice's original investigations in *Senseless*.

At first elusive, as if each image were the reflection of the film-maker himself, *Senseless*, creates for the film spectator a disarranged but glorious night. Images like floating songs pass between the screen and the film spectator. The film spectators' conditioned states become eclipsed; thoughts collide in disbelief. Truth causes blemishes upon the surface of the film spectators' brain. Alone, surrounded by the burning fires of truth, Ron Rice salutes the sun, as the spectators seek refuge.

* Joseph von Sternberg has suggested that it is impossible to create a documentary film. Once the film-maker selects even a setting, or plans a composition — does any planning — the film ceases to be spontaneous; ceases to be a documentary.

Ron Rice's images in *Senseless*. His images become linked in a golden chain, and like the words of a poem they quarrel, dispute and seek their meaning through the joyous encounter of light upon imprisoned celluloid. Leaping like fantastic silver fish, the images in black and white, continuously accelerated, often soft, consistently graceful become ecstatic before the film spectators' eyes. In rising and falling crescendo images of ugliness and torment are introduced suggesting a measure of contemporary life. Minutes and seconds no longer exist; precise meanings in this rich journey of symbol born of visions test the imagination of the film spectator.

An image of a swarm of bees may, perhaps, denote false friendship. The image of the intestines of a bull may or may not denote *compassion* and *affection*? Ultimately the film spectator must select and prepare the itinerary of the filmic journey himself. If he fails to perceive any meaning whatsoever, then that particular film spectator is without a soul: a representative of twentieth century society. Or is it too much to demand an act of faith?

To whom does Ron Rice offer his golden images; from what mountain peak has he descended like Zarathustra to revisit the city through his film, *Senseless*; what has he experienced during his act of faith, the filming of *Senseless*?

From the depths of the marble sea of inspiration a rainbow has risen, arched itself across the earth and its resplendent colors have mingled with the language of the beasts. Ron Rice deliriously rising and falling in the lower world of the Styx has populated his work with Night Gods within a projecting space of twenty-eight minutes.

Moving along a bankside the film spectator becomes absent within the image of two figures whose bodies, faces, hands, feet remain barely visible. The film spectator experiences a feeling of his body, face, hands, feet subsiding beyond time. Suddenly the images change; there is an increased awareness of joyousness. Streams of water, cascades, jubilant fountains splash across

LETTER FROM LONDON

by Mark Shivas

A MAN who reviews phonograph records in the London "Observer" at present often appears under the pseudonym of James Breen to write about movies. He has decided that the cinema is now replacing music as the 'top art', God help us.

"Queen" magazine recently ran a 'Space-age guide for Social Astronauts' which replaced the expressions like 'In' and 'Out' with 'Go,' 'Rogue' and 'Abort.' "The cinema is generally 'Go,'" twittered this glossy publication, "but films in foreign languages are 'Rogue' (released on the right course, but now in the wrong orbit); English films are usually 'Abort.' Cowboy films are always 'Go.'"

In England right now it seems that the number of people going to see films varies inversely with the amount written about them. Last quarter saw the appearance of a new film magazine called "Movie," which is indisputably splendid. Indisputably from my point of view because I am involved in it both spiritually and financially, being its assistant editor. "Movie" wants to remedy the lack of reasoned disagreement about films in Britain and elsewhere, and it doesn't attempt to be exhaustive in its coverage. It only reviews films which interest its critics, and has caused some raised eyebrows over here by spending a lot of words on films like *Satan Never Sleeps*, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* and *Merrill's Marauders*. It has devoted the larger part of two issues to the work of Otto Preminger and Howard Hawks, two directors who interest us more than,

the absorbed faces of the film spectators. Laces, designs, a male torso, a female torso, negative footage of a bullfight become life and death. The world reels, Aristotle is toppled; beginning, middle and end become displaced, the present is shattered. *Senseless*, everywhere, everyone, everything shouts Ron Rice. With one midnight stroke Ron Rice's film shoots out of the projector leaving his spectator impaled upon disbelief. A filmmaker's soul has approached the film spectator through poetry and it is the privilege of the film spectator to approach the offspring, *Senseless*, with heart and mind, for it is the work of a filmmaker; a golden poet.

say, Wyler, Zinnemann, Kramer or Wise. The appearance in the first issue of a Talent Histogram of British and American directors seems to have angered a lot of people, but we now count at least one of those whom we dismissed as The Rest among our subscribers.

Other film magazines here continue to offend various people and get away with it: "Films and Filming" last month compared Renoir's *Le Caporal Epinglé* with *Carry On Sergeant* and offended almost everyone by dismissing this great film in fewer words than it expended on Tony Richardson's distressing *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*.

"The Monthly Film Bulletin," however, found that it could not afford to offend film distributors with its 9-critic star system of classification of the month's films. "The Bulletin" started off by classifying films thus: four stars for a Masterpiece, three for Essential Viewing, two for Viewable. One meant "If there's nothing on TV." A blob denoted an absence. The following month, "If there's nothing on TV" was replaced by "If you want to go to a movie." A square marked "No comment" replaced the blob. Two months later, one star was called simply "Acceptable." Now this table of opinion has been withdrawn altogether as a result of pressure from distributors.

The London Film Festival this year did record business. On one Friday night they put out a program that lasted from 11 o'clock till 8.15 next morning. As a result of somebody's whimsical sense of humor, it began with Bunuel's *El Angel Exterminador* which concerns a group of

people trapped in a room for several days . . . The program was booked out, and it is thought by responsible members of the British Film Institute that the house would be filled to capacity even if patrons were required to stand on their heads to see the films.

The Festival, which is now recognized as a valuable market for selling foreign movies, as usual brought over the best films from other festivals — *Le Caporal Epingle*, *El Angel Exterminador*, *Vivre sa Vie*, Bresson's *Jeanne D'Arc* — but also introduced some new ones. Chief among these was *Rakas* (Darling) from Finland, a pleasantly uninhibited variation on the theme of the bachelor who doesn't want to settle down. Jean Douchet, of "Cahiers du Cinema," brought over his first film, an elegant short called *Le Mannequin de Belleville* about a fashion photographer looking for an ideal background for his model. It has wit and an eye for the fantastic side of reality: not surprising that one of Douchet's favorite directors is Minnelli.

But, in common with other festivals, there wasn't a vast amount to excite. Absurd to expect any festival to come up with more than a couple of first-rate films among its twenty or thirty entries. Essential, then, that there should be sun, a beach and all the delights that those ingredients imply. The London Festival takes place in the National Film Theatre, which is situated under one arch of a bridge over the River Thames. Draughts and damp replace sun and sand. But happily, London provides more good films than the standard festival to make up for the deficiencies, and this year there was one masterpiece in the Renoir.

Otherwise, the year seems to have had more than its fair share of marvels. Most of the good continental films were well received by the London critics — *Viridiana*, *Jules and Jim*, *Cleo*, *Chronicle of a Summer* — but as usual, the American films got less than their due. There still seems to be a block against films in the English language which don't have "Respectability" written all over them. *The Man who shot Liberty Valance* got less than its due, in spite of John Ford being well-respected. *Advise and Consent* was surprisingly well received, but *Two Weeks in Another Town* was ridiculed by everyone but Dilys Powell in "The Sunday Times." Lang's *Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse* died after a critical wallop, and played for three weeks with *Blood of the Vampire* before disappearing. With German dialogue and

English subtitles, the film might have seemed more respectable to our critics, but it appeared dubbed. Since *The Thousand Eyes* differs very little from Lang's other works, it is difficult to explain why the critics all loved his earlier work when it was shown in a season at the National Film Theatre, and then changed their minds when his latest film appeared commercially and dubbed. I fear that the same thing may happen when Hawks' *Hatari!* appears during a season of the great man's work at the National Film Theatre. It will be "How have the mighty fallen" again.

Almost nobody liked *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, *Boys Night Out*, or *The Chapman Report*. *The Chapman Report*, in particular, is the kind of film that emphasizes the gulf between critics and audience, and between those who can't see the film for the story or can't see the story for the film. In intention, the film is catch-penny and leering. In result it is that, but something more besides. Thanks to George Cukor's direction of his actresses, the film has some of the relation between questioner and subject that are to be found in Rouch. In front of the camera in a single take, the character is mechanically questioned so that she is forced to look at herself in relation to a supposed norm of behavior. She is not the norm, but she has been brought up to believe in the importance of conformity, and as she realises that she cannot conform to the typical woman, she breaks down. This theme is stated in three ways straight, and in one way — with Glynis Johns—in farcical terms. In this episode, the absurdity of the Chapman report idea is forcefully stressed. Very few critics here even mentioned the film's incidental virtues, its beauty, its color, nor even complained at the film's brutal hacking by our censor.

Bits and pieces: three interesting British films will be Alexander MacKendrick's *Sammy Going South*, Seth Holt's *Station Six Sahara*, and probably Clive Donner's *The Caretaker*. Donner's *Some People* is the only new British film of any life at all, and has done excellent business.

Viridiana has been banned in one of the home countries of London because it might cause offense to Catholics.

Agnes Varda's *Cleo* was being considered by the Rank Organization for a limited release in this country "C'est la gloire," she was heard to say.

A cinema in the Charing Cross Road in London

advertises the imminent appearance of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* "starring two hundred thousand Nazis." "If there are any demonstrations, the projection will be stopped."

Naked as Nature Intended is now in its second year in London. *South Pacific* just came off after five years. *Dr. No* is doing huge business on re-

ROMAN NOTEBOOK

by Storm De Hirsch

THE LATEST controversial film now playing in Italian movie houses is *Le quattro giornate di Napoli* which relates the spontaneous popular uprising that took place among the Neapolitans against the Nazi forces towards the end of the war. Directed by Nanni Loy, a young and forthright film-maker who had previously annoyed some governmental officials with his resistance film, *Day of the Lion*, its opening here was greeted by most of the dailies as some kind of national event, a document to the glory of Naples and Italy, while up North beyond the border, the German press denounced it as a distortion of history. Following directly on the heels of *Allarmi siam fascisti*, which was a smashing box-office success as well as a critical one, *Le quattro giornate di Napoli* seems to have settled down for a long run in the local houses.

Roberto Rossellini was quoted as saying one day in a major Roman newspaper that he was quitting films altogether. This announcement raised eyebrows in the Italian film world which were lowered only when Rossellini himself rose up to his full stature and denied the report emphatically. Said Rossellini: "These days everything is being distorted for the sake of publicity. If I say to a journalist that the sun is out today, it appears in the papers that I had said it was a scorching day or that it was boiling hot. The notice that I was quitting films probably grew out of the fact that I had declared my decision to break away from the traditional kind of film-making I had been associated with in the past. I plan to enter completely new areas of film-making. But right now I don't care to discuss it any further. It's a matter of prudence. One must do things in complete silence, that is, do them first, then talk about them."

Fellini has completed shooting and has started editing. The new film, tentatively entitled *Fellini 8½*, should be ready by the Spring of next

year. Britain is sick.

Sick, but not quite lying down: the critic of "The Evening Standard" complained that the English episodes of *The Longest Day* last only 23 minutes 41 seconds. "Hardly amounts to one of our finest hours" he said. National pride, you see, is not altogether dead.

year. Everybody connected with the film seems to be anxious and worried about it except Fellini himself as he takes his own sweet time putting the sequences together and weaving his editorial spell.

The New American Cinema, which was first represented here in Italy last year with an exhibition of over 15 independently produced films at Spoleto and which was given further attention this year when Jonas Mekas' *Guns of the Trees* won the top award at the Porretta Festival, is having a marked influence upon many young Italian film-makers. The variety of personal styles, the individual boldness, the revolt against the calcified and "official" ways of making films, the smashing of the economic myth — all these factors that underlie the independent movement in the States, are being constantly discussed among the young documentarists who are fed up with the encroaching industrialization of the Italian cinema now that Rome has become Hollywood. Several young film-makers are banding together to find new ways of financing and distribution — through cine-clubs and the *Cinema d'Essai* houses which are the nearest thing to successful independently run art houses in the States. The movement is in its very early stages but the ferment is definitely there and out of the enthusiasm and excitement generated by these independents, we should, in the near future, see some new and important film-makers emerge.

New and old films seen here recently and which should be brought to American screens: Bernardo Bertolucci's *La commare secca*, Pasolini's *Accattone* and *Mamma Roma*, Visconti's *La terra trema*, Antonioni's *Cronaca di un amore* and *I vinti*, Luciano Salce's *La voglia matta*, Rossellini's *The Machine That Kills People*, Ermanno Olmi's *Il posto*, Vittorio De Seta's *Banditi ad Orgosolo*, Lino del Fra's *Allarmi siam fascisti*, Pietro Germi's *The Straw Man* and Franco Rossi's *Smog*.

COFFEE, BRANDY & CIGARS XXXVIII

by Herman G. Weinberg

*What ho! what ho! this fellow is dancing mad!
He hath been bitten by the Tarantula.*

POE: *The Gold Bug*

THROUGH the courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, I was recently able to see some 50,000 feet of footage shot by Eisenstein for *Que Viva Mexico* — 7000 feet put together by Bell & Howell for *Zapotec Village* and *Mexican Symphony* and 43,000 feet printed up from the original negative by Jay Leyda which didn't get used in his 4-hour study material from the film prepared under a special grant. It is of this 43,000 feet that I'd like to speak briefly. There are scenes of the flora and fauna of Mexico (pumas, monkeys, pelicans, parrots, etc.) so rapturously photographed as to make one feel this is the way it must have been in the Garden of Eden before man fell from grace. Here is the purest pantheism. There are the white cathedrals (dazzlingly white) as if sculptured by some half-mad master pastry-chef out of spun sugar, so frenetic is the Mexican baroque which makes even the most extravagant European baroque pale by comparison. (Though Eisenstein photographed countless churches, he never filmed a single church interior — it was the incredible façades as architecture that fascinated him.) There are the flower boats of Xochimilco, floating gardens gliding through quiet lagoons carrying señoritas and their *caballeros*, lazily strumming guitars, flirting and kissing in the late afternoon sun as the oarsmen, as in Venice, paddle them along. There is the deep jungle and the tides of the gulf lapping the shoreline at dusk with the sudden star-like burst of a maguey plant silhouetted in the moonlight. On the plains and plateaus are the ruins of Aztec, Mayan and Toltec temples, silent monoliths of an ancient grandeur with the old stone gods waiting for sacrifices which never again will be made — and seen in these gloriously photographed images as they will never be seen by any tourist.

Endless fiestas, ritual dances, village and city life, the idyllic life of tropical Yucatan and Tehuantepec, bull-fights, thousands of feet of bull-fights whose barbarism was never more murderously depicted, more scenes of the *Calaveras*,

or Death Day celebrations, even more visually intoxicating than the ones we know from the Sol Lesser short, *Death Day*, made from this material, scenes supplementing the footage used for *Thunder Over Mexico* and *Time in the Sun*, every bit as magnificent, but "born to blush unseen" as a poet once said. There is the great Independence Day parade in Mexico City — the army, police, fire-fighters resplendent in their uniforms, the sun glinting off their sabres and helmets, the dignitaries reviewing them, these dignitaries who will be shown as skeletons under their gold braid and frock coats on the holiday of Calaveras when the Mexican peon laughs at death, having lived and suffered so long in its shadow. And so the footage goes. There is hardly an aspect of Mexico that Eisenstein didn't cover. How did he plan to use all this material in a single film? That remains the great and forever to be unanswered question. There are candid shots of Upton Sinclair, too, he who made this great and, as it turned out, sad venture possible; shots of Alexandrov at dusk looking out over the Gulf of Mexico, a statement by Upton Sinclair defending *Thunder Over Mexico*, intended as a prologue to the film which was never used; there is even a shot of Eisenstein, himself, on the porch of Sinclair's home in California, smiling shyly as he sits down in the half-light of early evening to a conference with Sinclair on the project for the Mexican film. And there are the still to be printed up thousands of feet of negative reposing silently in the Museum of Modern Art vaults in Long Island City. What of them? What do they contain? Will Alexandrov really, as he recently stated, go through with his plan to "reconstitute" *Que Viva Mexico*? He has Eisenstein's script and notes. Will the Soviet Government negotiate for this material with the Museum of Modern Art which has it on permanent loan from Upton Sinclair? Whatever the ultimate answer, it will not change the glory of this footage an iota. It remains as a silent memorial to a shattered dream that, had this really been the best of all possible worlds, could conceivably have resulted in one of the greatest works of art of the Twentieth Century, alas, alas . . . !

The dance known as the "twist" is nothing new. In 1925 Flaherty's *Moana*, filmed in Polynesia, contained a dance, the "siva," which is the "twist" in its purest form.

When *Potemkin* was first shown in Sweden it was recut, by government decree, in such a way as to show the mutiny by the sailors put down and its perpetrators shot.

Titling a foreign film gives you a chance to study it to the nth degree since you comb every foot of it slowly and carefully, over and over. My recent assignment to title *Sundays and Cybele*, starring a 12-year-old French charmer, Patricia Gozzi, convinced me that the French consistently make the best films about children — *Visages des Enfants*, *Poil de Carotte*, *La Marnelle*, *Forbidden Games*, *The 400 Blows*, etc. and now this latest example of a great Gallic tradition. We make *Lolita* and the French make *Sundays and Cybele* . . .

Add to the honor roll of great Russian cameramen (Tissé, Kabalov, Demutzki, Golovnia, Moskvin, Kuznetsov, etc.) the name of Urusevsky, most recently for his virtuoso work in *The Letter That Was Not Sent*. The long, harrowing sequence of the forest fire is surely one of the most amazing scenes ever filmed. Kalatozov, the director, is Russia's ciné-poet of the wastelands. His 1930 *Salt of Svanetia* documented a bleak area of the Caucasian Mountains with a ferocious realism that became sur-real . . . and his rendering of an environment as in the desolate Siberian landscapes of *The Letter That Was Not Sent* seems offhand to be scarcely less an achievement than what Stroheim and his cameramen accomplished in Death Valley for *Greed*.

Hollywood is so obsessed with money as the supreme goal and end-all of human happiness that it becomes delirious in depicting the things that money will buy. Did you ever notice how silken the photography becomes, how lush the music (mostly shimmering strings, *bien entendu*) suddenly cascades, in such scenes? Like diving nude into a pool of whipped cream.

Was there ever a fantastic movie-set that could match the incredible fantasy of the temple atop the sheer cliffs of the sacred city of Lhasa in Tibet?

Someone ought to do a piece called, "The Turd Kickers," tracing this venerable institution in the movies from Charles Ray and Richard Barthelmess to its most recent practitioners like James Stewart and Gary Cooper (except in *Morocco*)

including those females in direct line of descent like Judy Garland, etc.

Was ever anything sadder and sweeter (both at the same time, and aside from Chaplin) than that moment at the beginning of *Lady With a Dog* when Anna Sergeevna (exquisitely played by Iya Savvina) says to the handsome stranger who has just been approached by her little white dog, "He won't bite."? The mixture of loneliness, half-hope that the incident might lead to an acquaintance, assurance that the pup would in truth not bite — all this distilled into a single glinting drop of dialogue like the mystery of the human heart refracted by a prism.

If this column ever becomes famous, it'll surely be, among whatever other reasons, for touching on items that probably would never have occurred to anyone else, to wit: Did you know that when Ventucci (Cesare Gravina) shows Prince Karamzin (Stroheim) the picture of his deranged daughter's dead mother in *Foolish Wives*, it is a photo of Stroheim's wife?

When Darryl Zanuck fired Mankiewicz from *Cleopatra*, preventing him from editing it, I was reminded of the gallant tribute paid Zanuck by Mankiewicz in the latter's *All About Eve* and of "the years like black oxen that trample us under foot."

I've been asked why I singled out so "difficult" a picture as *Guns of the Trees* as the best film so far of the American "new wave." Because it was made from principle. A cinema without principle is as alien to Jonas Mekas as life without principle. When you think about it, very few films are ever made from principle . . . and I hope you know the kind of principle I mean. Many excellent films have also been made outside this persuasion, but if you don't start with a principle you have to substitute something else salutary instead. After all, from what principle did *The Last Laugh*, say, or *The 39 Steps*, or *The Devil Is a Woman* spring? What was substituted was very salutary, indeed, but even this substitution wouldn't have been salutary to the degree that it was in works like these if their creators hadn't been men of principle. In short: art isn't possible from an unprincipled man. It is one of the grandest things about art.

The movie press-agents don't seem to care (or don't know) what they say, hence *Boccaccio 70* is heralded as "the first 3-act motion picture ever made" when, in sooth, as far back as 1924 Leni's *Waxworks* was a "3-act" film and there

have been many since, including the comparatively recent Maugham trilogy, *Trio* (how short memories are!).

I urge all those who see or plan to see *Sodom and Gomorrah* to try to see a half-hour short, *Lot in Sodom*, made in the early Thirties by J. Sibley Watson and Melville Webber, on the same subject. It is not only one of the high points of the American cinema but there's no pussy-footing about the subject. It also contains the greatest prismatic cinematography I've ever seen . . . and a remarkable musical score by one Louis Siegel that is among the most original (in its best sense) scores ever done for a film. (Prints are at Brandon Films, Cinema Guild and the George Eastman House.)

One of the best American gangster films is all but forgotten today and hasn't been seen in a generation — Roland Brown's *Quick Millions*. And when will we see Sternberg's *Dragnet* and *Thunderbolt* again?

Why doesn't someone do a piece on Tod Browning, director of the famous *The Unholy Three?* (The first version). Who was he? Where did he come from? From what bizzare brain came an output of such diablerie as would give Dr. Caligari himself the shakes. No adulterated bogey-man stuff but pure red-eye guaranteed to make the viscera go into conniptions.

"*Ulysses* I've killed completely but whatever other Jerry Wald properties are suitable we'll activate and, of course, Connie Wald and the estate will have equities in these. Jack Cardiff, who was to have directed the James Joyce opus (*Ulysses*) agreed to a year's postponement because he knows that we're trying to 'insure' ourselves and he's not going to be given any 'dog' property." (Darryl Zanuck, *Variety*, Sept. 12, 1962).

Joris Ivens, the Dutch cinéaste, who began his career with a film on rain over 30 years ago, has come "full circle." After documenting the civil wars in China, Spain, Cuba, he has returned to his first love, as true artists always do (some never even veer from it) and will do next a film about wind — the *mistral*, that heady air current that originates in the Alps and blows through the south of France to the Mediterranean. (Where is the present day Lubitsch or Preston Sturges, or at least Mal St. Clair or Harry d'Arrest, who'll do a satirical comedy about the effects of the *mistral*, the *fon* or the *sirocco*, on a heterogeneous group of people caught in their

devastating paths? Renoir came close in *Picnic on the Grass* but there it was attributed fancifully to the pipes of Pan. But Renoir was on the right track, as he always is no matter what track it is, and he always returns to nature, as befits the son of the great Auguste Renoir. "*N'oubliez pas la Nature!*" shouted the *douanier* Rousseau for all time.

The arms coming out of the walls holding candelabras in Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* were antedated over a century ago by Theophile Gautier in his sepulchral story, *One of Cleopatra's Nights*, and two centuries before that by an unknown Italian sculptor of a bronze torch-bearing arm. Cocteau's twist was to make out of these purely decorative arms *real* arms.

A Reuters dispatch from Geneva in a recent issue of the *New York Times*: "Hollywood sometimes spends more money on a single film than the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Health Organization in an entire year, according to the magazine *World Health*."

Apropos *Greed*: "Wife Rated Tops As Penny Pincher — Chicago, UPI — One study shows it is the wife who is the tightwad in most families . . . A pilot study by the Public Relations Board shows that most ladies are ready to cut out their husbands' beer and cigar money when the budget runs low . . . Most of the husbands studied wanted more labor-saving household appliances for their wives, but the women saw little need for such husband-savers as power lawnmowers." (*N.Y. Times*, March 30, 1962)

Apropos *Potemkin*: "Prisoners in Riot Over Stew; Sheriff says It Stays on Menu — San Antonio, Tex., UPI — Prisoners at the Bexar County jail here rioted and set mattresses afire today in protest against being served stew for lunch. Four were injured . . . Wax bullets and high-pressure water hoses were used to break up the riot which involved 130 men and lasted two hours. Sheriff William Hauck ordered stew to be served again for the evening meal. "The food is good," he said. (*N.Y. Times*, Sept. 6, 1962)

Again, before you think the style of *Last Year at Marienbad* is original, read Christopher Morley's "Thunder on the Left."

I like to think of Proust arriving at a party and, as he takes off his coat, asks his hostess, "What's new?"

I like the introduction of Bette Davis in *Fog Over Frisco* (a good title wasted) — three bal-

loons in front of the camera lens go plop, two, three and there she is.

I like the narrated chariot race in the James Nicholas-Ted Zarpas' *Electra*, after Euripedes, starring Anna Synodinou, far better than the one literally acted out in *Ben Hur*.

I like the "F" nudging the "U" in the word "FUN" on the animated electric sign in Times Square when it "showed" Norman McLaren's delightful film advertising travel in Canada last Summer. It brought back memories of the Siamese girl in the bordello nudging Prince Nikki in Stroheim's *The Wedding March* when he says he has to leave to visit a nice girl. The Siamese beauty digs him in the ribs with her elbow. "At this hour?" she asks. "That's when her parents snore the loudest!" laughs the Prince. Ah, *The Wedding March* . . . ! Most wistful of all films about sacred and profane love . . .

After a night of spree

I have come to purify myself

Under your window

As if it were an altar.

(Old Flamenco song)

Now who else would associate those two films? The most surprised person doubtless would be McLaren himself. (If this is not a bengal-light or roman candle, it is at least a small sparkler which I hold to keep the lights going for MM . . .)

I like Jim Card's music scores for Pabst's *Pandora's Box* and *Diary of a Lost One*, they are in fact perfectly splendid, and the curator of the George Eastman House, that marvelous film archive in Rochester, has turned out a real labor of love. Who couldn't be inspired by such a lovely creature as Louise Brooks, the star of both films, was at the time she appeared in them? You'd have to have a heart of stone not to be.

Speaking of *Pandora's Box*, every would-be director today ought to study it, among other such purely "director films" of the great classic age of the cinema. What a marvel of subtlety and cinema sophistication it is! It contains one of the best sequences ever filmed — the frenzied preparation backstage of an opulent musical extravaganza just before curtain-rise. Broken up into a thousand details, each dovetailing into the next (Pabst was a master at this) it literally takes your breath away with its choreographed movement. The effect is ravishing not only to the eye but to the vasomotor system.

An Italian film company which announced a motion picture on Mohammed was warned by the spiritual leader of Iran that if they persisted they would bring on a "Holy War" against Italy. (The Moslem religion forbids any pictorial representation of the Prophet of Islam, Allah's missionary on earth.)

What happened to the art of stylized acting (exaggeration to put across an idea, in which the style blends with every detail of the work, even to the *decor*)? Don't tell me, I know — it's disappeared. But I keep remembering Catherine Hessling in Renoir's *Nana*, Elena Kuzmina in the Soviet *The New Babylon*, Roy D'Arcy in Stroheim's *The Merry Widow*, Sam Jaffe in Sternberg's *The Scarlet Empress*, John Barrymore in *Twentieth Century*, not to mention Krauss in *Caligari*, Kortner in *Backstairs*, Jau-nings in *Waxworks* . . . I'd better stop this.

Who will cast Brigitte Bardot in the title role of Stroheim's gypsy novel, *Paprika*? And do, *but really do*, films on the lives of those odd fish — Bernhardt, Paganini, Diaghilev?

What can you make of this? Eisenstein invariably put a little boy in his films and gave him momentary prominence, viz., *Potemkin*, *Ten Days, Old and New*, *Que Viva Mexico*, *Bezhin Meadow* (a boy was the star), *Ivan the Terrible*. So did Flaherty; *Nanook*, *Moana*, *Man of Aran*, *Elephant Boy*, *Louisiana Story* (a boy was the star of both these last two) and even *Tabu* which he scripted for Murnau.

An item in the *New York Herald Tribune*, October 16th, 1962:

Orson Welles, who recently withdrew his Kafka film, *The Trial*, from the Venice Film Festival, yesterday issued an explanation through George E. Foley, president of Astor Pictures, distributors of the film. "I have nurtured this project from its very inception as a film vehicle," Mr. Welles said. "At the time of the Festival situation, the music sound track was incomplete. I felt it unfair and unjust to all concerned to show it in an unfinished state. This is my film. I will not bend to any pressure which attempts to force me to expose it to the public until I am completely satisfied that, in its every phrase, it is commensurate with the high standards I have set for myself. When the film is ready, I will be honored to show it at the Venice Film Festival or any other festival that invites it."

THE PERFECT FILMIC APPOSITENESS OF MARIA MONTEZ

by Jack Smith

"In Paris I can do no wrong, they love me there."
— Maria Montez

a few years later:
"Elle ne desert pas le nom d'actrice."
— *A Paris paper reviewing a film she made there.*

At least in America a Maria Montez could believe she was the Cobra woman, the Siren of Atlantis, Scheherazade, etc. She believed and thereby made the people who went to her movies believe. Those who could believe, did. Those who saw the World's Worst Actress just couldn't and they missed the magic. Too bad — their loss. Their magic comes from the most inevitable execution of the conventional pattern of acting. What they can appreciate is what most people agree upon — GOOD PERFS. Therefore you can have GOOD PERFS & no real belief. GOOD PERFS that give you no magic — oh I guess a sort of magic, a magic of sustained efficient operation (like the wonder that the car motor held out so well after a long trip).

But I tell you Maria Montez Moldy Movie Queen, Shoulder pad, gold platform wedgie Siren, Determined, dreambound, Spanish, Irish, Negro?, Indian girl who went to Hollywood from the Dominican Rep. Wretch actress — pathetic as actress, why insist upon her being an actress — why limit her. Don't slander her beautiful womanliness that took joy in her own beauty and all beauty — or whatever in her that turned plaster cornball sets to beauty. Her eye saw not just beauty but incredible, delirious, drug-like hallucinatory beauty.

The vast machinery of a movie company worked overtime to make her vision into sets. They achieved only inept approximations. But one of her atrocious acting sighs suffused a thousand tons of dead plaster with imaginative life and a truth.

Woman and yet imaginator / believer / child / simple pathetically believing with no defenses — a beautiful woman who could fantasy — do you know of a woman like that? There aren't any. Never before, never since — this was an extra-

ordinary unique person. Women — people — don't come in combinations that can/can't happen again:

fantasy — beauty

child — siren

creature — straight etc because each is all these plus its opposite — and to dig one woman is to mysteriously evoke all others and not from watching actresses give PERFS does one feel anything real about woman, about films, about the world, various as it is for all of us, about men. But to see one person — OK if only by some weird accident — exposing herself — having fun, believing in moldiness (still moldy, but if it can be true for her and produces delight — the delight of technicolor movies — then it would be wonderful if it could be true for us).

And in a crazy way it is all true for us because she is one of us. Is it invalid of her to be the way she is? If so, none of us are valid — a position each one of us feels a violation of oneself if taken by another person (whatever our private thots may be). If you think you are invalid you may be the person who ridicules Montez movies. To admit of Maria Montez validities would be to turn on to moldiness, Glamourous Rapture, schizophrenic delight, hopeless naivete, and glittering technicolored trash!

"Geef me that Coparah chewel!"

"Geef me that Coparah chewel!"

— *line of dialogue from Cobra Woman, possibly the greatest line of dialogue in any American flic.*

"Juvenile . . . trash . . ."

— *Jesse Zunser, N.Y. reviewer.*

Juvenile does not equal shameful and trash is the material of creators. It exists whether one approves or not. You may not approve of the Orient but it's half of the world and it's where spaghetti came from. Trash is true of Maria Montez flix but so are jewels, Cobra jewels and so is wondrous refinement —

Night — the villain / high priest enters the bedroom of the old queen (good) and stabs

her in her bed. Seen thru a carved screen in bkgnd — at that moment — the sacred volcano erupts (orange light flashes) Old queen stares balefully (says something?) and dies. Now the cobra priestess (the evil sister) and the high priest can seize Jon Hall betrothed to / and the good sister (rightful ruler) and imprisons them with no opposition. Persecution of Cobra Island — Crushing offerings demanded for King Cobra —

(Chunk of scenario synopsisized)

There is a (unsophisticated, certainly) validity there — also theatrical drama (the best kind) — also interesting symbolism, delirious hokey, glamour — unattainable (because once possessed) and juvenile at its most passionate.

If you scorn Montez-land (now gone anyway so you are safe from its contamination) you are safely out of something you were involved in once and you resent (in direct ratio to your scorn, even to rage) not being able to go back — resent the closed, rainbow colored gates, resent not being wanted there, being a drag on the industry.

Well, it's gone with the war years (when you know that your flix is going to make money you indulge in hokey — at these times when investments must be certain you must strictly follow banker-logic), Universal probably demolished the permanent Montez-land sets. Vera West committed suicide in her blackmail swimming pool. Montez dead in her bathtub from too much reducing salts. The colors are faded. Reel-Art Co. sold all her flix to T.V.

Montez-land (created of one woman's belief — not an actress') was made manifest on this earth, changed the world — 15 to 20 flix they made around her — OK vehicles (the idea of vehicles shouldn't be condemned because it has been abused), vehicles that were medium for her belief therefore necessary, a justice, a need felt — Real — as investment, as lots of work for extras, hilarious to serious persons, beloved to Puerto-Ricans, magic for me, beauty for many, a camp to homos, Fauve American unconsciousness to Europeans etc.

Can't happen again. Fantasies now feature weight lifters who think now how lucky and clever they were to get into the movies & the fabulous pay . . . , think something like that on camera — it's contagious & you share those thots (which is a magical fantasy too but another article on "The Industry"). All are now safe from Maria

Montez outrages! I suppose the color prints are destroyed now. Still, up until about 5 yrs ago, (when they were bought up by T.V.), Montez reissues cropped up at tiny nabes — every week one or another of them played somewhere in N.Y.C. At that time they were 12 to 17 years old. When they are shown now on T.V. they are badly chopped up, with large chunks missing. The pattern being repeated — their irresistibility resulting in their being cut & stabbed & punished. All are now safe from Montez embarrassment — the tiny nabes are torn down, didn't even make supermarkets — the big nabes have to get back investments so can't be asked (who'd ask) to show them. The art houses are committed to seriousness and importance, essays on celluloid (once it was sermons on celluloid), food for thought imported from THE CONTINENT. No more scoldings from critics . . .

At this moment in movie history there is a feeling of movies being approved of. There is an enveloping cloud of critical happiness — it's OK to love movies now. General approval (nobody knowing who starts it — but it's OK for you and everybody else). It's a pretty diffuse and general thing. Maria Montez flix were particular — you went for your particular reasons, dug them for personal reasons — had specific feelings from them & about them. It was a peculiarly idiosyncratic experience and heartily despised by critics. Critics are writers. They like writing — and written characters. Maria Montez's appeal was on a purely intuitive level. She was the bane of critics — that person whose effect cannot be known by words, described in words, flaunts words (her *image* spoke). Film critics are writers and they are hostile and uneasy in the presence of a visual phenomenon. They are most delighted by bare images that through visual barrenness call thought into play to fill the visual gap. Their bare delights are "purity and evocative." A spectacular, flaming image — since it threatens their critichood need to be able to write — is bad and they attack it throwing in moral extensions and hinting at idiocy in whoever is capable of visually appreciating a visual medium. Montez-land is truly torn down and contemporary sports-car Italians follow diagrams to fortunes, conquests, & murders to universal approbation.

Maria Montez was a very particular person:

Off screen she was:

A large, large boned woman

5' 9"

Oily
Skin dark,
& gave impression of being
dirty
Wore Shalimar perfume

It is a reminder of one's own individuality to value a particular screen personality. It is also a nuttiness (because gratuitous). But you will have nuttiness without Maria Montez — want more — need all you can get — need what ever you don't have — & need it badly — Need what you don't need — need what you hate — need what you have stood against all through the years. Having a favorite star has very human ramifications — not star-like entirely. Stars are not stars, they are people, and what they believe is written on their foreheads (a property of the camera). Having a favorite star is considered ludicrous but it is nothing but non verbal communication the darling of the very person who doesn't believe anything real can exist between a star and a real person. Being a star was an important part of the Montez style. Having Maria Montez as a favorite star has not been gratuitous (tho it was in 1945) since it has left a residue of notions, interesting to me as a film-maker and general film aesthete. No affection can remain gratuitous. Stars who believe nothing are believable in a variety of roles, not to me tho, who have abandoned myself to personal tweakiness.

Those who still underrate Maria Montez, should see that the truth of Montez flix is only the truth of them as it exists for those who like them and the fact that others get anything out of them is only important because it is something they could miss and important because it is enjoyment missed. No one wants to miss an enjoyment and it is important to enjoy because it is important to think and enjoying is simply thinking — Not hedonism, not voluptuousness — simply thought. I could go on to justify thought but I'm sure that wouldn't be necessary to readers of magazines. There is a world in Montez movies which reacting against turns to void. I can explain their interest for me but I can't turn them into good film technique. Good film technique is a classical attribute. *Zero de Conduite* — perfect film technique, form, length, etc., a classical work — Montez flix are none of these. They are romantic expressions. They came about because (as in the case of Von Sternberg) an inflexible person committed to an obsession was given his way thru some fortuitous circumstance.

Results of this sort of thing TRANSCEND FILM TECHNIQUE. Not barely — but resoundingly, meaningfully, with magnificence, with the vigor that one exposed human being always has — and with failure. We cause their downfall (after we have enjoyed them) because they embarrass us grown up as we are and post adolescent / post war / post graduate / post-toasties etc. The movies that were secret (I felt I had to sneak away to see M. M. flix) remain secret somehow and a nation forgets its pleasures, trash,

*Somebody saved the Marx Bros. by finding
SERIOUS MARXIAN BROTHERS
ATTRIBUTES.*

Film for these film romanticists (Marx Bros., Von Stroheim, Montez, Judy Canova, Ron Rice, Von Sternberg, etc.) a place. Not the classically inclined conception a strip of stuff (Before a mirror is a place) is a place where it is possible to clown, to pose, to act out fantasies, to not be seen while one gives (Movie sets are sheltered, exclusive places where nobody who doesn't belong can go) Rather the lens range is the place and the film a mirror image that moves as long as the above benighted company's beliefs remained unchallenged, and as far as their own beliefs moved them.

If Maria Montez were still alive she would be defunct. She would be unable to find work (Maybe emasculated mother type parts) She'd be passé, dated, rejected. A highly charged idiosyncratic person (in films) is a rare phenomenon in time as well as quantity. Unfortunately their uniqueness puts a limitation upon itself. Uniqueness of Quantity calling into existence a uniqueness of time to limit itself. We punish such uniqueness, we turn against it — give it only about 5 years (the average life of a star). Once lost these creatures cannot be recovered tho their recovery would be agreeable. Who wouldn't welcome back Veronica Lake who is by this time a thing in the air, a joke, a tragedy, a suffering symbol of downfall, working as a barmaid at Martha Washington Hotels — shorn. We lose them — our creatures. When some rudeness / cutting off of hair out of fear of wartime machinery / makes the believer disbelieve, the believer joins us in our wanting but not being able to believe and is through, first because of the cynicism of movie fans and secondly because of the resultant breakdown of their fantasy.

Corniness is the other side of marvelousness. What person believing in a fantasy can bear to

have its other side discovered. Thru accidents, rudenesses, scandals, human weaknesses have cut short those who made movie worlds (movies as place) that were too full to have room for anything but coincidences, politenesses & benightings. But denial is short lived. So will our denial of our personal films. Someday we will value these personal masterpieces. We don't have to do injustice to the film of cutting, camera movement, rhythm, classical feeling, structured, thought loaded (for there's the moldidness of the foreign darling, that it disobeys its own most central rule — that technique by itself can evoke as does poetry). Yet plots that demand serious definite attention spell out the evocation for the images.

On a very obvious level too much dialogue (still a violation even if it is no longer Hollywood-moronic) on an unsuspected level — much use of story furthering (different than Hollywood) images, rich with story furthering detail (more sophisticated than Hollywood details), rich with (more tour de force than H) cutting — all these exist not to create a film for itself but exactly the same effect as Hollywood Oprobriums — a film for a plot—all these tools of film STILL force an emphasis on the story because they each are used still to force an emphasis on the story and we only have a Hollywood disguised in sandals, Rivas, pallazzos, ascots, etc. A new set of cliches that we aren't familiar enough with yet to see as cliches. European films are not necessarily better than the most Hollywood of our flix, they are only different and that superficially — certainly not more filmic because they are every bit as / plot story word / orientated. This we will see clearly when we start to get tired of their particular set of thought & story cliches. And we must, because these are always oppressive in a film — are the oppressive parts of movies as we know them because they dissipate the film challenge — to use our eyes. To apprehend thru our eyes.

The whole gaudy array of secret-flix, any flic we enjoyed: Judy Canova flix (I don't even remember the names), *I walked with a Zombie*, *White Zombie*, *Hollywood Hotel*, all Montez flix, most Dorothy Lamour sarong flix, a gem called *Night Monster*, *Cat & the Canary*, *The Pirate*, Maureen O'Hara Spanish Galleon flix (all Spanish Galleon flix anyway), all Busby Berkely flix, *Flower Thief*, all musicals that had production numbers, especially Rio de Janeiro prod.

nos., all Marx Bros. flix. Each reader will add to the list.

Above kind of film is valid only when done by one who is its master — not valid in copies. Only valid when done with flair, corniness, and enjoyment. These masterpieces will be remembered because of their peculiar haunting quality — the copies will drop away from memory and the secret film will be faced. We still feel the disgust and insult of the copies and react against the whole body including the originals. The secret films were the most defenseless since they afford to ignore what bad copies caused us to come its demand in order to protect ourselves from the bad copies. And they being the pure expressions have had to take all the blame.

A bad copy film has a way of evoking a feeling of waste that is distressing. Waste of time in months, money in millions — we spent our own best part of a dollar — and hope for more film excitement was made guilty in lying sequels — squandered money. The guilt has come to be applied to the flix that were copied. (Who will ever admit having enjoyed a Judy Canova flix?) The flix of the 30's and 40's (even I detest flix of the 50's) are especially guilty because they haven't acquired the respectability of anti-quareanism. Anyway the secret flic is also a guilty flic.

These were light films — if we really believed that films are visual it would be possible to believe these rather pure cinema — weak technique, true, but rich imagery. They had a stilted, phony imagery that we choose to object to, but why react against that phoniness. That phoniness could be valued as rich in interest & revealing. Why do we object to not being convinced — why can't we enjoy phoniness? Why resent the patent "phoniness" of these films — because it holds a mirror to our own, possibly.

The primitive allure of movies is a thing of light and shadows. A bad film is one which doesn't flicker and shift and move through lights and shadows, contrasts, textures by way of light. If I have these I don't mind phoniness (or the sincerity of clever actors), simple minded plots (or novelistic "good" plots), nonsense or seriousness (I don't feel nonsense in movies as a threat to my mind since I don't go to movies for the ideas that arise from sensibleness of ideas). Images evoke feelings and ideas that are suggested by feeling. Nonsense on one given night might arouse contemptuous feeling and leave me with

ideas of resolution which I might extend to personal problems and thus I might be left with great sense. It's a very personal process — thoughts via images and therefore very varied. More interesting to me than discovering what is a script writer's exact meaning. Images always give rise to a complex of feelings, thots, conjectures, speculations, etc. Why then place any value on good or bad scripts — since the best of scripts detracts most from the visual import. I suspect we are less comfortable in the visual realm than in the literary. Visual truths are blunt, whereas thots can be altered to suit & protect. The eye falls into disuse as a receiver of impressions & films (images) mean nothing without word meanings.

Our great interest in films is partly the challenge it presents us to step into the visual realm, A personality type star appeals to, informs the eye. Maria Montez was remarkable for the gracefulness of her gestures and movement. This gracefulness was a real process of moviemaking. Was a real delight for the eye — was a genuine thing about that person — the acting was lousy but if something genuine got on film why carp about acting — which HAS to be phoney anyway — I'd RATHER HAVE atrocious acting. Acting to Maria Montez was hoodwinking. Her real concerns (her conviction of beauty / her beauty) were the main concern — her acting had to be secondary. An applying of one's convictions to one's activity obtains a higher excellence in that activity than that attained by those in that activity who apply the rules established by previous successes by others.

The more rules broken the more enriched becomes the activity as it has had to expand to include what a human view of the activity won't allow it to not include.

What is it we want from film?

A vital experience

an imagination

an emotional release

all these & what we want from life

Contact with something

we are not, know not,

think not, feel not, understand not,

therefore: An expansion.

Because Maria Montez who embodies all the above cannot be denied — was not denied — the mass of thoughts we have about film must be added to, to include her acting, since anybody's acting is only the medium of soulful exchange and is not important in itself except at the point

that the acting student learns to forget its rules; In Maria Montez's case a high fulfillment was reached without ever having known the rules and those who adore rules could only feel offence, and expressed it in ridicule.

M. M. dreamed she was effective, imagined she acted, cared for nothing but her fantasy (she attracted fantasy movies to herself — that needed her — they would have been ridiculous with any other actress — any other human being) Those who credit dreams became her fans. Only actress can have fans and by a dream coming true she became and actually was and is an actress.

(Go to the T. D. of the NYPL — go to the actress dept., ask for stills of "Maria Montez." Six Gigantic Volumes of delirious photos will come up on the dumb waiter.)

But in my movies I know that I prefer non actor stars to "convincing" actor-stars — only a personality that exposes itself — if through moldiness (human slips can convince me — in movies) and I was very convinced by Maria Montez in her particular case of her great beauty and integrity.

I finish this article — a friend, Davis Gurin, came to tell me "I came to tell you, tonight I saw a young man in the street with a plastic rose in his mouth declaiming — I am Maria Montez, I am M.M." A nutty manifestation, true — but in some way a true statement. Some way we must come to understand that person. Not worth understanding perhaps — but understanding is a process — not the subject it chooses. But that process has a Maria Montez dept. as well as a film dept. and you bought this magazine for a dollar.

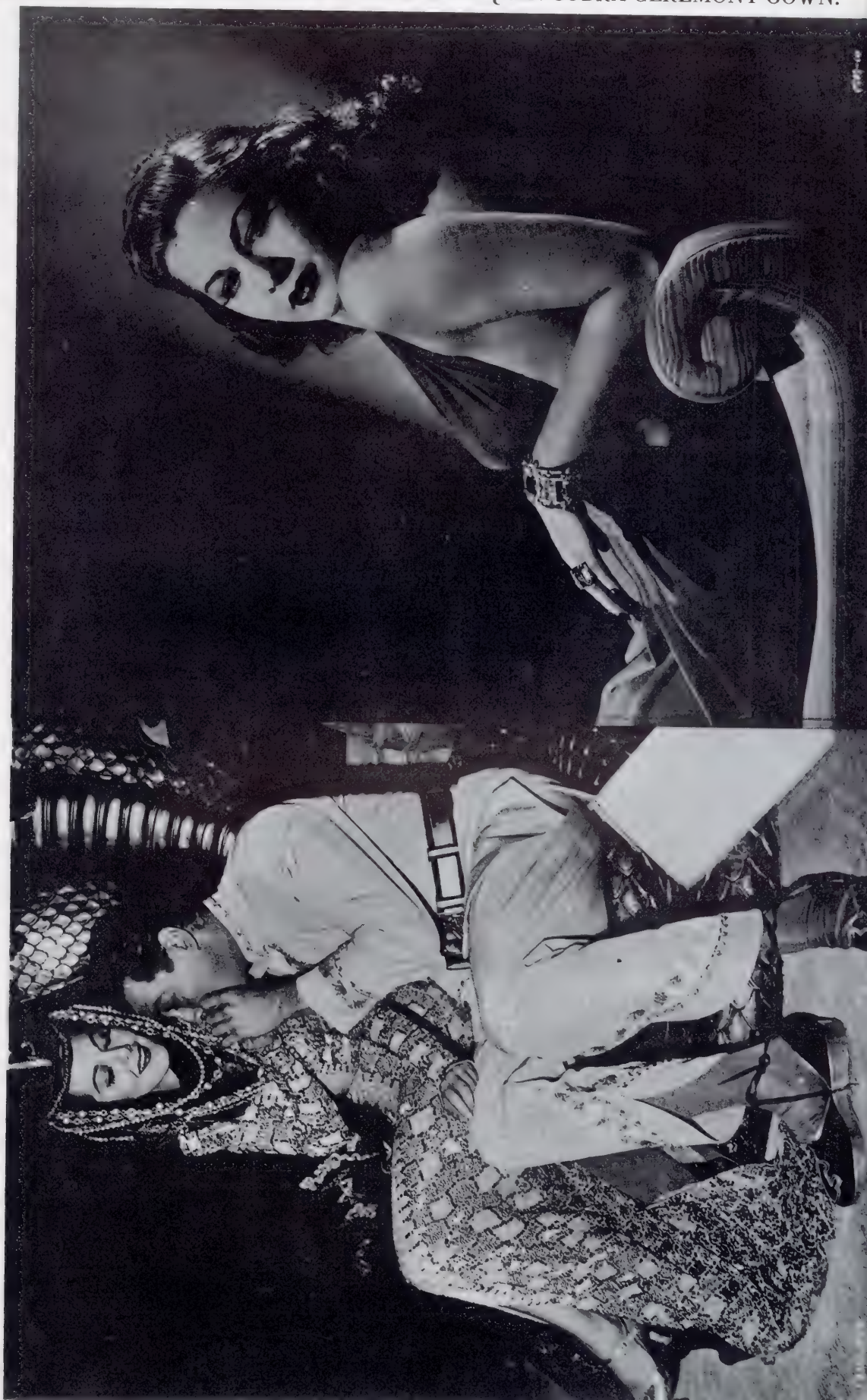
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MARIA MONTEZ. BOTTOM: THE FAMOUS PLASTIC SEQUIN COBRA CEREMONY GOWN.



TOP: ARABIAN NIGHTS. BOTTOM: ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES.



TOP: SCHECHERAZADE. BOTTOM: MONTEZLAND.



TOP: WHITE SAVAGE. "MARIA MONTEZ VISITS PORT CORAL IN SEARCH OF HER BROTHER TAMARA."





SHIRLEY CLARKE SHOOTING "THE COOL WORLD." PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEROY
McLUCAS.















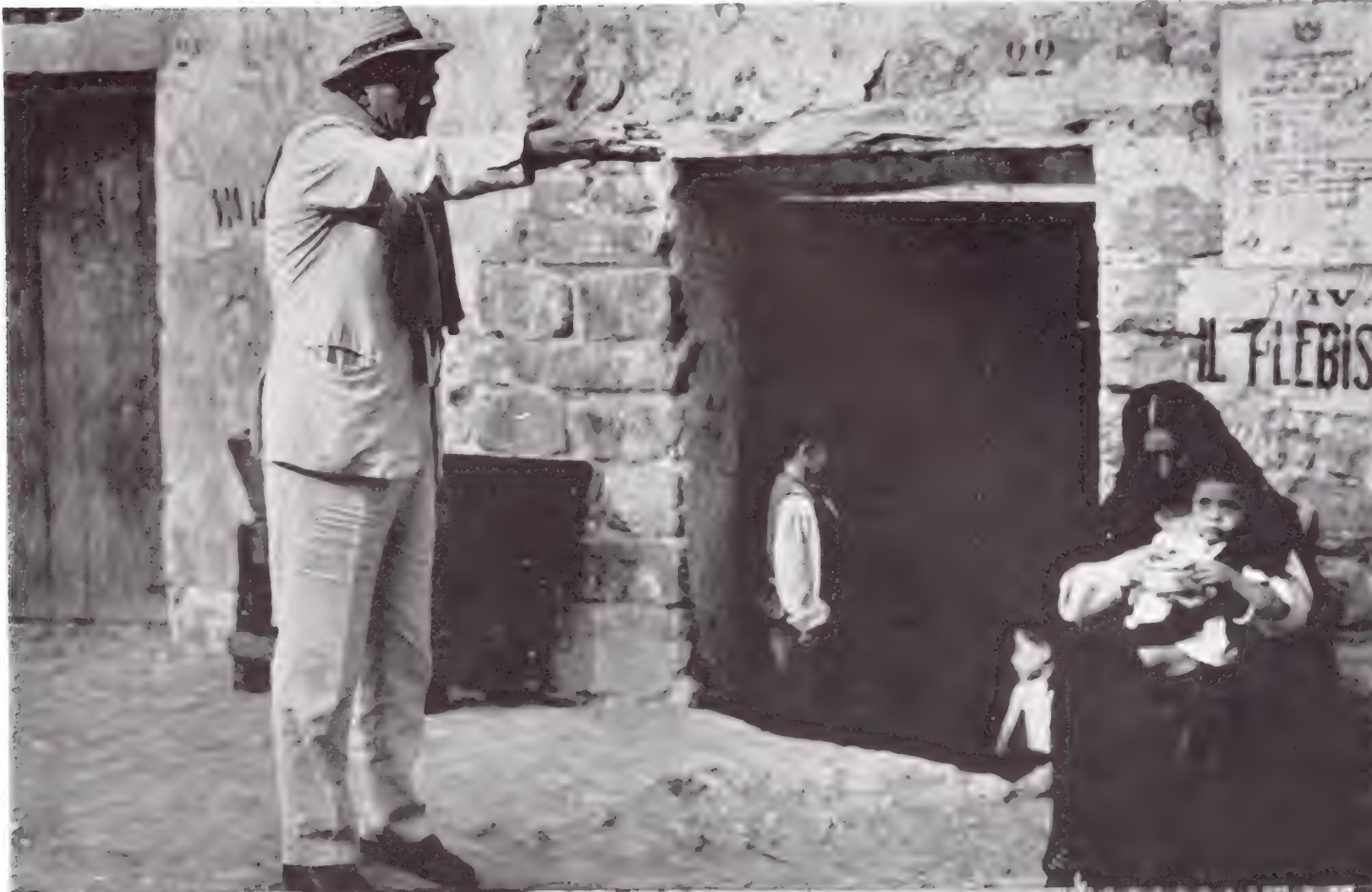
INDEPENDENTS IN NEW YORK. TOP: DORAN W. CANNON DIRECTS A YACHT FOR HIS FIRST FEATURE, "LEWIS & ALAN GO TO MAINE & MEET JANE." SHELDON ROCHLIN IS THE CAMERAMAN. BOTTOM: GREGORY MARKOPOULOS SHOOTING "TWICE A MAN."



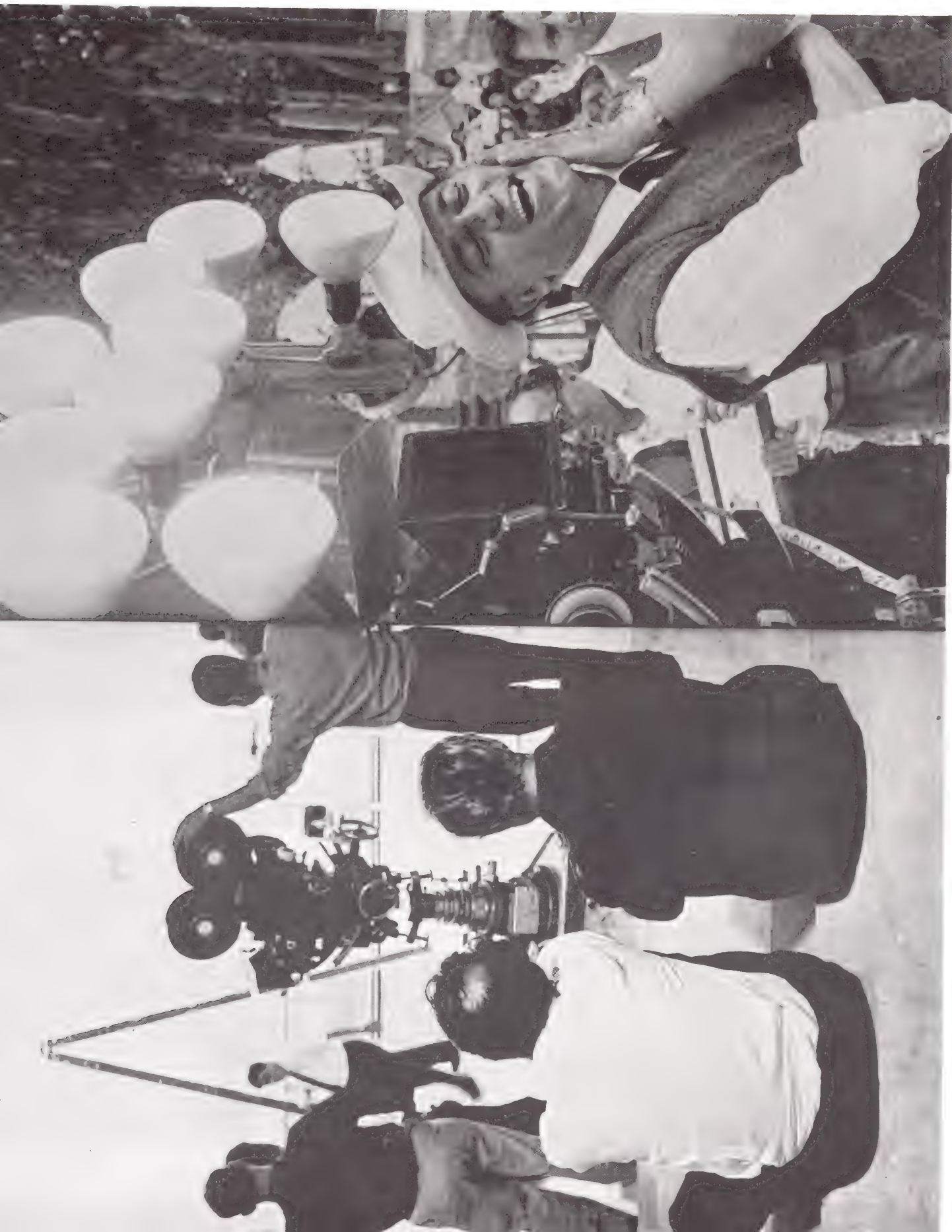
AMERICAN INDEPENDENTS IN ROME. TOP: PEPPE LENTI AND GIORGIO TURI SHOOTING "DAY AT THE ROMAN FLEA MARKET." DIRECTOR, LOUIS BRIGANTE. BOTTOM: STORM DE HIRSCH SHOOTING HER FIRST FEATURE, "GOODBYE IN THE MIRROR." GIORGIO TURI IS THE CAMERAMAN.



LUCHINO VISCONTI SHOOTING "GATTOPARDO."



FEDERICO FELLINI SHOOTING "FELLINI 8½". BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT: FELLINI & MASTROIANNI.



THE DAY ORSON WELLES FRIGHTENED THE WORLD

Compiled from the Archives of the New York Public Library Theatre Collection.
Credits: Photo of Orson Welles — St. Louis Post Dispatch, May 5, 1940; "Radio Listeners in Panic" — The New York Times, October 31, 1938; "Scare is Nation-Wide" — The N. Y. Times, October 31, 1938; "FCC To Scan Script" — The N. Y. Times, November 1st, 1938; "No FCC Action Due" — The N. Y. Times, November 2, 1938; "Mars Panic Useful" — N. Y. World Telegram, November 2, 1938; "It Seems to Me" — N. Y. Telegram, November 2, 1938; "On the Record" — N. Y. Tribune, November 2, 1938; "Mars Radio Play Wins" — N. Y. Sun, November 1, 1938; "Orson Welles Explains" — Radio Guide, November 19, 1938; "This is the Orson Welles Broadcast" — Radio Guide, November 19, 1938; "Opinions" — Radio Guide, November 19, 1938.



Reporters interviewing Welles (center) on the night of October 30, 1938, immediately after his broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System caused many to think Martians had invaded the United States.

(International News Photo)

Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama as Fact

Many in This Area Flee Homes to Escape 'Gas Raid'—Phone Calls Swamp Police at Broadcast of Wells Fantasy

A wave of mass hysteria seized thousands of radio listeners throughout the nation between 8:15 and 9:30 o'clock last night when a broadcast of a dramatization of H. G. Wells's fantasy, "The War of the Worlds," led thousands to believe that an interplanetary conflict had started with invading Martians spreading wide death and destruction in New Jersey and New York.

The broadcast, which disrupted households, interrupted religious services, created traffic jams and clogged communications systems, was made by Orson Welles, who as the radio character, "The Shadow," used to give "the creeps" to countless child listeners. This time at least a score of adults required medical treatment for shock and hysteria.

In Newark, in a single block at Heddon Terrace and Hawthorne Avenue, more than twenty families rushed out of their houses with wet handkerchiefs and towels over their faces to flee from what they believed was to be a gas raid. Some began moving household furniture.

Throughout New York families left their homes, some to flee to near-by parks. Thousands of persons called the police, newspapers and radio stations seeking advice on protective measures against the raids.

The program was produced by Mr. Welles and the Mercury Theatre of the Air over station WABC and the Columbia Broadcasting System's coast-to-coast network, from 8 to 9 o'clock.

The radio play, as presented, was to simulate a regular radio program with a "break-in" for the material of the play. The radio listeners, apparently, missed or did not listen to the introduction, which was: "The Columbia Broadcasting System and its affiliated stations present Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air in 'The War of the Worlds' by H. G. Wells."

They also failed to associate the program with the newspaper listing

of the program, announced as "Today: 8:00-9:00—Play: H. G. Wells's 'War of the Worlds'—WABC." They ignored three additional announcements made during the broadcast emphasizing its fictional nature.

Mr. Welles opened the program with a description of the series of which it is a part. The simulated program began. A weather report was given, prosaically. An announcer remarked that the program would be continued from a hotel, with dance music. For a few moments a dance program was given in the usual manner. Then there was a "break-in" with a "flash" about a professor at an observatory noting a series of gas explosions on the planet Mars.

News bulletins and scene broadcasts followed, reporting, with the technique in which the radio had reported actual events, the landing of a "meteor" near Princeton, N. J., "killing" 1,500 persons, the discovery that the "meteor" was a "metal cylinder" containing strange creatures from Mars armed with "death rays" to open hostilities against the inhabitants of the earth.

Despite the fantastic nature of the reported "occurrences," the program, coming after the recent war scare in Europe and a period in which the radio frequently had interrupted regularly scheduled programs to report developments in the Czechoslovak situation, caused fright and panic throughout the area of the broadcast.

Telephone lines were tied up with calls from listeners or persons who had heard of the broadcasts. Many sought first to verify the reports. But large numbers, obviously in a state of terror, asked how they could follow the broadcast's advice and flee from the city, whether they would be safer in the "gas raid" in the cellar or on the roof, how they could safeguard their children, and many of the questions which had been worrying residents of London and Paris during the terse days before the Munich agreement.

So many calls came to newspapers and so many newspapers found it advisable to check on the reports despite their fantastic content that The Associated Press sent out the following at 8:48 P. M.:

"Note to Editors: Queries to newspapers from radio listeners throughout the United States tonight, regarding a reported meteor fall which killed a number of New Jerseyites, are the result of a studio

dramatization. The A. P."

Similarly police teletype systems carried notices to all stationhouses, and police short-wave radio stations notified police radio cars that the event was imaginary.

Message From the Police

The New York police sent out the following:

"To all receivers: Station WABC informs us that the broadcast just concluded over that station was a dramatization of a play. No cause for alarm."

The New Jersey State Police teletyped the following:

"Note to all receivers—WABC broadcast as drama re this section being attacked by residents of Mars. Imaginary affair."

From one New York theatre a manager reported that a throng of playgoers had rushed from his theatre as a result of the broadcast. He said that the wives of two men in the audience, having heard the broadcast, called the theatre and insisted that their husbands be paged. This spread the "news" to others in the audience.

The switchboard of THE NEW YORK TIMES was overwhelmed by the calls. A total of 875 were received. One man who called from Dayton, Ohio, asked, "What time will it be the end of the world?" A caller from the suburbs said he had had a houseful of guests and all had rushed out to the yard for safety.

Warren Dean, a member of the American Legion living in Manhattan, who telephoned to verify the "reports," expressed indignation which was typical of that of many callers.

"I've heard a lot of radio programs, but I've never heard anything as rotten as that," Mr. Dean said. "It was too realistic for comfort. They broke into a dance program with a news flash. Everybody in my house was agitated by the news. It went on just like press radio news."

At 9 o'clock a woman walked into the West Forty-seventh Street police station dragging two children, all carrying extra clothing. She said she was ready to leave the city. Police persuaded her to stay.

A garbled version of the reports reached the Dixie Bus Terminal, causing officials there to prepare to change their schedule on confirmation of "news" of an accident at Princeton on their New Jersey route. Miss Dorothy Brown at the terminal sought verification, however, when the caller refused to talk with the dispatcher, explaining to her that "the world is coming to an end and I have a lot to do."

Harlem Shaken By the "News"

Harlem was shaken by the "news." Thirty men and women rushed into the West 123d Street police station and twelve into the West 135th Street station saying they had their household goods packed and were all ready to leave Harlem if the police would tell them where to go to be "evacuated." One man insisted he had heard "the President's voice" over the radio advising all citizens to leave the cities.

The parlor churches in the Negro district, congregations of the smaller sects meeting on the ground floors of brownstone houses, took the "news" in stride as less faithful parishioners rushed in with it, seeking spiritual consolation. Evening services became "end of the world" prayer meetings in some.

One man ran into the Wadsworth Avenue Police Station in Washington Heights, white with terror, shouting that enemy planes were crossing the Hudson River and asking what he should do. A man came in to the West 152d Street Station, seeking traffic directions. The broadcast became a rumor that spread through the district and many persons stood on street corners hoping for a sight of the "battle" in the skies.

One man living in the vicinity of the Vanderveer Park police station in Brooklyn walked into the station house, shaking with terror. He asked if the police thought it advisable for him to take his family out of the city. Shown the teletype reassurance, he left, shamefaced.

In Queens the principal question asked of the switchboard operators at Police Headquarters was whether "the wave of poison gas will reach as far as Queens." Many said they were all packed up and ready to leave Queens when told to do so.

Feared Bombing of City

Samuel Tishman of 100 Riverside Drive was one of the multitude that fled into the street after hearing part of the program. He declared that hundreds of persons evacuated their homes fearing that the "city was being bombed."

"I came home at 9:15 P. M. just in time to receive a telephone call from my nephew who was frantic with fear. He told me the city was about to be bombed from the air and advised me to get out of the building at once. I turned on the radio and heard the broadcast which corroborated what my nephew had said, grabbed my hat and coat and a few personal belongings and ran to the elevator. When I got to the street there were hundreds of people milling around in panic. Most of us ran toward Broadway and it was not until we stopped taxi drivers who had heard the entire broadcast on their radios that we knew what it was all about. It was the most asinine stunt I ever heard of."

"I heard that broadcast and almost had a heart attack," said Louis Winkler of 1,322 Clay Avenue, the Bronx. "I didn't tune it in until the program was half over, but when I heard the names and titles of Federal, State and municipal officials and when the 'Secretary of the Interior' was introduced, I was convinced that it was the McCoy. I ran out into the street with scores of others, and found people running in all directions. The whole thing came over as a news broadcast and in my mind it was a pretty crummy thing to do."

The Telegraph Bureau switchboard at police headquarters in Manhattan, operated by thirteen men, was so swamped with calls

from apprehensive citizens inquiring about the broadcast that police business was seriously interfered with.

Headquarters, unable to reach the radio station by telephone, sent a radio patrol car there to ascertain the reason for the reaction to the program. When the explanation was given, a police message was sent to all precincts in the five boroughs advising the commands of the cause.

"They're Bombing New Jersey!"

Patrolman John Morrison was on duty at the switchboard in the Bronx Police Headquarters when, as he afterward expressed it, all the lines became busy at once. Among the first who answered was a man who informed him:

"They're bombing New Jersey!"

"How do you know?" Patrolman Morrison inquired.

"I heard it on the radio," the voice at the other end of the wire replied. "Then I went to the roof and I could see the smoke from the bombs, drifting over toward New York. What shall I do?"

The patrolman calmed the caller as well as he could, then answered other inquiries from persons who wanted to know whether the reports of a bombardment were true, and if so where they should take refuge.

Meanwhile, Bronx headquarters communicated with Manhattan police headquarters, learned that the deluge of calls had been occasioned by a radio broadcast, and so informed persons who telephoned later. The number of calls received in the Bronx was not estimated.

At Brooklyn police headquarters, eight men assigned to the monitor switchboard estimated that they had answered more than 300 inquiries from persons who had been alarmed by the broadcast. A number of these, the police said, came from motorists who had heard the program over their car radios and were alarmed both for themselves and for persons at their homes. Also, the Brooklyn police reported, a preponderance of the calls seemed to come from women.

The National Broadcasting Company reported that men stationed at the WJZ transmitting station at Bound Brook, N. J., had received dozens of calls from residents of that area. The transmitting station communicated with New York and passed the information that there was no cause for alarm to the persons who inquired later.

Meanwhile the New York telephone operators of the company found their switchboards swamped with incoming demands for information, although the NBC system had no part in the program.

Record Westchester Calls

The State, county, parkway and local police in Westchester County were swamped also with calls from terrified residents. Of the local police departments, Mount Vernon, White Plains, Mount Kisco, Yonkers and Tarrytown received most of the inquiries. At first the authorities thought they were being

made the victims of a practical joke, but when the calls persisted and increased in volume they began to make inquiries. The New York Telephone Company reported that it had never handled so many calls in one hour in years in Westchester.

One man called the Mount Vernon Police Headquarters to find out "where the forty policemen were killed"; another said his brother was ill in bed listening to the broadcast and when he heard the reports he got into an automobile and "disappeared." "I'm nearly crazy!" the caller exclaimed.

Because some of the inmates took the catastrophic reports seriously as they came over the radio, some of the hospitals and the county penitentiary ordered that the radios be turned off.

Thousands of calls came in to Newark Police Headquarters. These were not only from the terror-stricken. Hundreds of physicians and nurses, believing the reports to be true, called to volunteer their services to aid the "injured." City officials also called in to make "emergency" arrangements for the population. Radio cars were stopped by the panicky throughout that city.

Jersey City police headquarters received similar calls. One woman asked Detective Timothy Grooty, on duty there, "Shall I close my windows?" A man asked, "Have the police any extra gas masks?" Many of the callers, on being assured the reports were fiction, queried again and again, uncertain in whom to believe.

Scores of persons in lower Newark Avenue, Jersey City, left their homes and stood fearfully in the street, looking with apprehension toward the sky. A radio car was dispatched there to reassure them.

The incident at Hedden Terrace and Hawthorne Avenue, in Newark, one of the most dramatic in the area, caused a tie-up in traffic for blocks around. The more than twenty families there apparently believed the "gas attack" had started, and so reported to the police. An ambulance, three radio cars and a police emergency squad of eight men were sent to the scene with full inhalator apparatus.

They found the families with wet cloths on faces contorted with hysteria. The police calmed them, halted those who were attempting to move their furniture on their cars and after a time were able to clear the traffic snarl.

At St. Michael's Hospital, High Street and Central Avenue, in the heart of the Newark industrial district, fifteen men and women were treated for shock and hysteria. In some cases it was necessary to give sedatives, and nurses and physicians sat down and talked with the more seriously affected.

While this was going on, three persons with children under treatment in the institution telephoned that they were taking them out and leaving the city, but their fears were calmed when hospital authorities explained what had happened.

A flickering of electric lights in

Bergen County from about 6:15 to 6:30 this evening provided a buildup for the terror: that was to ensue when the radio broadcast started.

Without going out entirely, the lights dimmed and brightened alternately and radio reception was also affected. The Public Service Gas and Electric Company was mystified by the behavior of the lights, declaring there was nothing wrong at their power plants or in their distributing system. A spokesman for the service department said a call was made to Newark and the same situation was reported. He believed, he said, that the condition was general throughout the State.

The New Jersey Bell Telephone Company reported that every central office in the State was flooded with calls for more than an hour and the company did not have time to summon emergency operators to relieve the congestion. Hardest hit was the Trenton toll office, which handled calls from all over the East.

One of the radio reports, the statement about the mobilization of 7,000 national guardsmen in New Jersey, caused the armories of the Sussex and Essex troops to be swamped with calls from officers and men seeking information about the mobilization place.

Prayers for Deliverance

In Caldwell, N. J., an excited parishioner ran into the First Baptist Church during evening services and shouted that a meteor had fallen, showering death and destruction, and that North Jersey was threatened. The Rev. Thomas Thomas, the pastor quieted the congregation and all prayed for deliverance from the "catastrophe."

East Orange police headquarters received more than 200 calls from persons who wanted to know what to do to escape the "gas." Unaware of the broadcast, the switchboard operator tried to telephone Newark, but was unable to get the call through because the switchboard at Newark headquarters was tied up. The mystery was not cleared up until a teletype explanation had been received from Trenton.

More than 100 calls were received at Maplewood police headquarters and during the excitement two families of motorists, residents of New York City, arrived at the station to inquire how they were to get back to their homes now that the Pulaski Skyway had been blown up.

The women and children were crying and it took some time for the police to convince them that the catastrophe was fictitious. Many persons who called Maplewood said their neighbors were packing their possessions and preparing to leave for the country.

In Orange, N. J., an unidentified man rushed into the lobby of the Lido Theatre, a neighborhood motion picture house, with the intention of "warning" the audience that a meteor had fallen on Raymond Boulevard, Newark, and was spreading poisonous gases. Skeptical, Al Hochberg, manager of the

theatre, prevented the man from entering the auditorium of the theatre and then called the police. He was informed that the radio broadcast was responsible for the man's alarm.

William H. Decker of 20 Aubrey Road, Montclair, N. J., denounced the broadcast as "a disgrace" and "an outrage," which he said had frightened hundreds of residents in his community, including children. He said he knew of one woman who ran into the street with her two children and asked for the help of neighbors in saving them.

"We were sitting in the living room casually listening to the radio," he said, "when we heard reports of a meteor falling near New Brunswick and reports that gas was spreading. Then there was an announcement of the Secretary of Interior from Washington who spoke of the happening as a major disaster. It was the worst thing I ever heard over the air."

Columbia Explains Broadcast

The Columbia Broadcasting System issued a statement saying that the adaptation of Mr. Wells's novel which was broadcast "followed the original closely, but to make the imaginary details more interesting to American listeners the adapter, Orson Welles, substituted an American locale for the English scenes of the story."

Pointing out that the fictional character of the broadcast had been announced four times and had been previously publicized, it continued:

"Nevertheless, the program apparently was produced with such vividness that some listeners who may have heard only fragments thought the broadcast was fact, not fiction. Hundreds of telephone calls reaching CBS stations, city authorities, newspaper offices and police headquarters in various cities testified to the mistaken belief.

"Naturally, it was neither Columbia's nor the Mercury Theatre's intention to mislead any one, and when it became evident that a part of the audience had been disturbed by the performance five announcements were read over the network later in the evening to reassure those listeners."

Expressing profound regret that his dramatic efforts should cause such consternation, Mr. Welles said: "I don't think we will choose anything like this again." He hesitated about presenting it, he disclosed, because "it was our thought that perhaps people might be bored or annoyed at hearing a tale so improbable."

SCARE IS NATION-WIDE

Broadcast Spreads Fear in New England, the South and West

Last night's radio "war scare" shocked thousands of men, women and children in the big cities throughout the country. Newspaper offices, police stations and radio stations were besieged with calls from anxious relatives of New Jersey residents, and in some places

anxious groups discussed the impending menace of a disastrous war.

Most of the listeners who sought more information were widely confused over the reports they had heard, and many were indignant when they learned that fiction was the cause of their alarm.

In San Francisco the general impression of listeners seemed to be that an overwhelming force had invaded the United States from the air, was in the process of destroying New York and threatening to move westward. "My God," roared one inquirer into a telephone, "where can I volunteer my services? We've got to stop this awful thing."

Newspaper offices and radio stations in Chicago were swamped with telephone calls about the "meteor" that had fallen in New Jersey. Some said they had relatives in the "stricken area" and asked if the casualty list was available.

In parts of St. Louis men and women clustered in the streets in residential areas to discuss what they should do in the face of the sudden war. One suburban resident drove fifteen miles to a newspaper office to verify the radio "report."

In New Orleans a general impression prevailed that New Jersey had been devastated by the "invaders," but fewer inquiries were received than in other cities.

The Associated Press gathered the following reports of reaction to the broadcast:

At Fayetteville, N. C., people with relatives in the section of New Jersey where the mythical visitation had its locale went to a newspaper office in tears, seeking information.

A message from Providence, R. I., said: "Weeping and hysterical women swamped the switchboard of The Providence Journal for details of the massacre and destruction at New York, and officials of the electric company received scores of calls urging them to turn off all lights so that the city would be safe from the enemy."

Mass hysteria mounted so high in some cases that people told the police and newspapers they "saw" the invasion.

The Boston Globe told of one woman who claimed she could "see the fire," and said she and many others in her neighborhood were "getting out of here."

Minneapolis and St. Paul police switchboards were deluged with calls from frightened people.

The Times-Dispatch in Richmond, Va., reported some of their telephone calls came from people who said they were "praying."

The Kansas City bureau of The Associated Press received inquiries on the "meteors" from Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Beaumont, Texas, and St. Joseph, Mo., in addition to having its local switchboards flooded with calls. One telephone informant said he had loaded all his children into his car, had filled it with gasoline, and was going somewhere. "Where is it safe?" he wanted to know.

Atlanta reported that listeners throughout the Southeast "had it that a planet struck in New Jersey, with monsters and almost everything and anywhere from 40 to 7,000 people reported killed." Editors said "responsible persons, known to them, were among the anxious information seekers.

In Birmingham, Ala., people gathered in groups and prayed, and Memphis had its full quota of weeping women calling in to learn the facts.

In Indianapolis a woman ran into a church screaming: "New York destroyed; it's the end of the world. You might as well go home to die. I just heard it on the radio." Services were dismissed immediately.

Five students at Brevard College, N. C., fainted and panic gripped the campus for a half hour with many students fighting for telephones to ask their parents to come and get them.

A man in Pittsburgh said he returned home in the midst of the broadcast and found his wife in the bathroom, a bottle of poison in her hand, and screaming: "I'd rather die this way than like that."

He calmed her, listened to the broadcast and then rushed to a telephone to get an explanation.

FCC TO SCAN SCRIPT OF 'WAR' BROADCAST

Radio System, Expressing Its Regret at Panic, Will Curb Simulated News Items

The Federal Communications Commission requested yesterday a transcript and electric recording of the radio broadcast Sunday night which dramatized H. G. Wells's 41-year-old novel, "The War of the Worlds," and spread panic among thousands of Americans convinced that fiction in the form of tensely spoken "news" bulletins was stark fact.

Pending receipt of the script from the Columbia Broadcasting System, Frank R. McNinch, chairman of the commission, called the program "regrettable," but was silent as to the course of action the FCC might take. It was made plain that a thorough study of the text would precede any decision.

Many Listeners Incensed

Meanwhile, with large sections of the radio-listening public incensed

over what they regarded as a dangerous hoax, the broadcasting system and Orson Welles, the 23-year-old star of the disputed show, joined in issuing statements of regret. The CBS, through W. B. Lewis, vice president in charge of programs, reiterated that announcements of the nature of the presentation had been made "before, after and twice during" the feature, but added:

"In order that this may not happen again the program department hereafter will not use the technique of a simulated news broadcast within a dramatization when the circumstances of the broadcast could cause immediate alarm to numbers of listeners."

Along similar lines was a statement from Neville Miller, president of the National Association of Broadcasters. It was made public in Washington, where interest in the broadcast and the problem it posed was surprisingly great. With a wide variety of conversational controversies arising from the situation, Commissioner T. A. M. Craven, New Jersey member of the body headed by Mr. McNinch, raised the question of censorship.

Mr. Craven agreed the investigation should be held, but asked "utmost caution" to avoid censorship and declared that the public "does not want a spineless radio."

Wells Asks Retraction

Another development of the day came from H. G. Wells himself, who is in London, through his local agent, Jaques Chambrun of 745 Fifth Avenue, who hinted at legal trouble for the sponsors of the broadcast if a "retraction" was not forthcoming. Mr. Chambrun said:

"In the name of Mr. H. G. Wells, I granted the Columbia Broadcasting System the right to dramatize Mr. H. G. Wells's novel, "The War of the Worlds," for one performance over the radio. It was not explained to me that this dramatization would be made with a liberty that amounts to a complete rewriting of "The War of the Worlds," and renders it into an entirely different story.

"Mr. Wells and I consider that by so doing the Columbia Broadcasting System and Mr. Orson Welles have far overstepped their rights in the matter and believe that the Columbia Broadcasting System should make a full retraction. Mr. H. G. Wells personally is deeply concerned that any work of his should be used in a way, and with a totally unwarranted liberty, to cause deep distress and alarm throughout the United States."

When this point was brought up to Mr. Welles, he said he had not considered the possibility of action

because he had thought that the program constituted a "legitimate dramatization of a published work." Nothing regarding a step in the nature of a retraction was forthcoming from the broadcasting organization and Mr. Welles indicated he would seek legal advice if it became necessary. He expressed his admiration for the Wells "classic" and implied his appreciation for the right to make use of it in any form.

Trouble for Late Listeners

Copies of the script made available here showed clearly how persons who tuned in just after the opening of the program at 8 P. M., might have heard almost half an hour of a story that, except for its references to residents of Mars and the fantastic nature of the events described, was disconcerting to say the least—before there was any assurance that it was all in fun.

Following the preliminary announcements, listeners heard a few moments of dance music originating from a "hotel," and then an interruption in the long-familiar style of announcers rushing on the air with important news. It was at that point, undoubtedly, that fears began to spread.

Dire reports continued to flash across the country as a well-schooled troupe brought the listeners the story of a supposed meteorite crashing near Trenton, N. J., out of which hideous Martians crawled, armed with a lethal "heat-ray" and ultimately a deadly black smoke that brought all human beings to an appalling doom.

For those who tuned in late, the first announcement of the truth was delayed until the "middle break," listed on the thirty-second page of the script. The whole interruption, which comprised a five-line description of the broadcast, and system and station announcements, was scheduled to take twenty seconds. After it, there was no relapse from make-believe until the close.

The New Jersey area got the worst of the scare not only because the adapters had chosen it as the scene of the alleged catastrophe but because geographical names were taken right off the map, with Princeton, Trenton and Groves Mill, a well-known landmark, specified.

Names of persons and institutions, on the other hand, were garbled. For what was presumably intended to suggest the American Museum of Natural History, the "National History Museum" was named. And the role taken by Mr. Welles—that of "Professor Richard Pierson, famous astronomer," of Pfincton—knowingly or otherwise, inevitably brought to the minds of several persons the name of Dr. Newton L. Pierce, assistant in astronomy at that university.

Undergraduates there, incidentally, were prompt to form a "League for Interplanetary Defense," one of whose platform planks was an embargo on all "Martial"—with a capital M—music.

Although a similar levity pervaded the comments of many persons—mainly those who had not heard any of the broadcast—there could

be no question that communities whose telephone service was cluttered during the peak of the fear were in no mood for joking. Such a one was Trenton, where City Manager Paul Morton sent to the FCC one of the twelve protests acknowledge later by Mr. McNinch.

Reaction Bewilders Actor

And it was plain that Mr. Welles himself, sleepless and unshaven, was concerned by the turn of events when he appeared at the CBS studios in the afternoon to issue a statement and grant an interview. His statement follows:

"Despite my deep regret over any misapprehension which our broadcast last night created among some listeners, I am even the more bewildered over this misunderstanding in the light of an analysis of the broadcast itself.

"It seems to me that there are four factors which should have in any event maintained the illusion of fiction in the broadcast.

"The first was that the broadcast was performed as if occurring in the future and as if it were then related by a survivor of a past occurrence. The date of the fanciful invasion of this planet by Martians was clearly given as 1939 and was so announced at the outset of the broadcast.

"The second element was the fact that the broadcast took place at our regular weekly Mercury Theatre period and had been so announced in all the papers. For seventeen consecutive weeks we have been broadcasting radio drama. Sixteen of these seventeen broadcasts have been fiction and have been presented as such. Only one in the series was a true story, the broadcast of "Hell on Ice" by Commander Ellsberg, and was identified as a true story within the framework of radio drama.

"The third element was the fact that at the very outset of the broadcast and twice during its enactment, listeners were told that this was a play, that it was an adaptation of an old novel by H. G. Wells. Furthermore, at the conclusion a detailed statement to this effect was made.

"The fourth factor seems to me to have been the most pertinent of all. That is the familiarity of the fable, within the American idiom, of Mars and Martians.

"For many decades 'The Man From Mars' has been almost a synonym for fantasy. In very old morgues of many newspapers there will be found a series of grotesque cartoons that ran daily, which gave this fantasy imaginary form. As a matter of fact, the fantasy as such has been used in radio programs many times. In these broadcasts, conflict between citizens of Mars and other planets has been a familiarly accepted fairy-tale. The same make-believe is familiar to newspaper readers through a comic strip that uses the same device."

Publicity Stunt Denied

Seated before a battery of news-reel cameras, Mr. Welles repeated elements of the statement in a

dozen ways, then took time to deny with a weary smile that the whole thing was a "plant" to publicize the Mercury Theatre's new play, "Danton's Death," scheduled to open tomorrow night. A similar denial came subsequently from the firm of Charles Scribner's Sons, when it was pointed out that H. G. Wells' "Apropos of Dolores" had been published yesterday.

Mr. Welles, who did the adaptation himself, said that among the many telegrams he had received regarding the broadcast there were many from listeners saying "how much they liked the show."

No Action Due in Canada

By The Canadian Press.

TORONTO, Oct. 31.—Gordon Conant, Attorney General of Ontario, said tonight his department did not plan action over the broadcast of a realistic radio drama, which, emanating from the United States and rebroadcast here, caused widespread alarm. The Attorney General would not comment on possible methods of program censorship, but declared: "It is certainly not in the public interest that such broadcasts should be allowed."

NO FCC ACTION DUE IN RADIO 'WAR' CASE

Possible Statement of Regret
Seen as Only Result of the
Welles Broadcast

ITS INQUIRY IS DELAYED

Sound Records of the Program
Awaited—Commission to
Hold Session Today

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 1.—While the Federal Communications Commission today postponed formal study of the broadcast of "The War of Worlds," which sent thousands of persons throughout the country into panic on Sunday evening, there were fairly definite indications that no action would be taken beyond a possible statement of regret that the program was staged in too realistic a manner.

The commission held a formal all-day meeting under the chairmanship of Frank R. McNinch, but devoted all its time to considering a docket of routine cases.

A session will be held, possibly tomorrow, to study the broadcast, but it will consist of little more than a formal review of a sheaf of formal complaints, according to persons familiar with the attitude of the commission. A formal decision may not be handed down for

a week or more.

The reason for the postponement today of immediate consideration of the program was given as the fact that an electrical transcription of the program as it went over the air had not arrived when the commissioners closed their offices for the day.

The Columbia Broadcasting System, which put the mock Martian invasion on the air, delivered a copy of the script, which was typed in duplicate, for examination by the members, but there was a natural delay in shipment of the sound record itself.

When that is received the commission will meet in private session to have the records played to get a true impression of how it sounded coming from the radios of listeners. As far as could be learned, no member or high-ranking official of the commission heard the broadcast on Sunday evening.

Only George Henry Payne among the members of the commission reiterated today criticism of the program made by some officials here yesterday. He said that "ministers throughout the country have protested that radio terror programs are frightening children" and urged a study of that type of program.

The commission has no control over broadcasts to the degree of censoring programs, but is limited in its action to protection of the public interest by the right of withholding renewals of licenses.

That law has been construed in a series of decisions as giving it the right to penalize stations for broadcasting obscenities and possibly to limit broadcasts which might be calculated to disturb the peace. It has used this authority sparingly.

Geologists at Princeton Hunt 'Meteor' in Vain

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PRINCETON, N. J., Oct. 30.—Scholastic calm deserted Princeton University briefly tonight following widespread misunderstanding of the WABC radio program announcing the arrival of Martians to subdue the earth.

Dr. Arthur F. Buddington, chairman of the Department of Geology, and Dr. Harry Hess, Professor of Geology, received the first alarming reports in a form indicating that a meteor had fallen near Dutch Neck, some five miles away. They armed themselves with the necessary equipment and set out to find a specimen. All they found was a group of sightseers, searching like themselves for the meteor.

At least a dozen students received telephone calls from their parents, alarmed by the broadcast. The Daily Princetonian, campus newspaper, received numerous calls from students and alumni.

"Mars Panic" Useful *By Hugh S. Johnson*

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2.—One of the most remarkable demonstrations of modern times was the startling effect of the absurd radio scenario of Orson Welles based on an old Jules Verne type of novel by H. G. Wells—"The War of the Worlds."



Simulated Columbia broadcast radio flashes of a pretended attack, with mysterious new aerial weapons, on New Jersey from the planet Mars, put many people into such a panic that the witch-burning Mr. McNinch, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, has a new excuse to extend the creeping hand of government restriction

of free speech by way of radio censorship.

When the hysterical echoes of an initial hysterical explosion die down the whole incident will assay out as about the silliest teapot tempest in human history.

There are no men on Mars. If there were there would be no occasion for their attack on earth. If there were such an occasion there is no reason to believe that in Mars, or anywhere else, there are weapons that could devastate a State or two in fifteen minutes. The result of public panic was so absurd as to be unpredictable by anybody—even the Columbia Broadcasting System and the author of the script. The idea of using the incident to discipline or censor anybody is ridiculous.

Incident Significant.

But the incident is highly significant. It reveals dramatically a state of public mind. Too many people have been led by outright propaganda to believe in some new and magic power of air attack and other developments in the weapons of war.

It is true that they are far more powerful than they formerly were. But it is also true that the defensive weapons against them are also far more powerful. Thus it has always been since the days of the Mace-

donian phalanx. Always the dope is that some magic new armament is going to change the face of war. Always events prove that invention for defense keeps abreast of invention for attack. Always it turns out that the outcome is decided by the shock of masses of men breast to breast—and in no other way.

This does not for a moment mean that this country can neglect any development of its weapons for defense. It has done that in the past. If this hysterical happening means anything it is that there is a vague restless suspicion among the people of the truth that there has been such neglect.

Many things have happened and—let us hope—in time, to wake us up to these defensive defaults. There was the Munich sell-out and the sudden disclosure of Hitler and Mussolini as masters of Europe through the neglect of their defenses by both England and France compared with the vast military preparations of the dictatorships. There are the slow leaks of some of the shocking things that Hitler suggested as his price for peace, among them German air and naval bases in the Caribbean—direct threats against us. Finally, there comes this dramatic proof of the jitters of our own people on the subject of our own defenses.

Aid to Defense Program.

On the face of things a similar thing will not be permitted to happen again by any of our great broadcasting systems. But when the smoke all drifts away their innocence will be clear and the value of this incident may be credited to them as unintended assistance to the President's great defense program.

The crumbling of British and French power in Europe, Africa, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, plus German aggressiveness and insistence on air and naval bases far too close to us for comfort, puts an entirely new face on our defense program. If this nutty, panicky development serves no other purpose than to make that clearer, it will have served its unintended purpose and have proved its unpredictable value.

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It Seems to Me

By Heywood Broun

I'm still scared. I didn't hear the broadcast, and I doubt that I would have called up the police to complain merely because I heard that men from a strange machine were knocking the daylights out of Princeton. That doesn't happen to be news this season. My first reaction would have been, "That's no. Martian but merely McDonald, of Harvard, carrying the ball on what the coaches call a 'naked reverse' or Sally Rand shift."



Just the same, I live in terror that almost any time now a metal cylinder will come to earth, and out of it will step fearsome creatures carrying death ray guns. And their faces will be forbidding, because the next radio invasion is likely to be an expedition of the censors.

Obviously, Orson Welles put too much curdle on the radio ways, but there isn't a chance on earth that any chain will sanction such a stunt again. In fact, I think it would be an excellent rule to make the provision that nothing can be put forward as a news broadcast unless it actually is news. This is a domain which should not be disturbed even for in-

nocuous and comic effect. Nor do I think it would smack of censorship if plugs for a product were required to be identified as advertising matter.

Some of the entertainers and commentators have grown far too kittenish in slinging the cigarets and the tooth paste around in portions of the program theoretically devoted to comic relief. In spite of boners such as the recent escapade about Mars, the radio remains inhibited and too timid for its own good.

Weapons More D vastating.

We have much more reason to fear censors than octopi from the distant skies. The weapons which they may use can be much more far-reaching and devastating than any to be conjured up in a fantastic horror story. It is not a good thing that thousands of gullible people should be needlessly frightened out of their wits, if any. Possibly it is too much to ask the mixed audiences which radio commands to face the inventions of that lively pseudo-scientific

sort to which the imagination of H. G. Wells turned when he was very young.

But Mr. Wells, of late, has faced more factual subjects. I have not recently caught up with his

current economic and political views, for he sets them down on paper at a pace which leaves the willing reader breathless. When last my eye encountered his words he was liberal rather than radical. But he possessed so lively a concern for the world and so deep a faith that it can be changed for the better that there is no telling what theory he may spring suddenly.

Up to last Sunday night the State Department seemed to be unruffled as to visits from Martians. There is no record that any stranger from that inhabited planet had ever been detained at Ellis Island for questioning or had his visa canceled. Of course, the line of questioning would be obvious.

Maybe a Socialist State.

According to such astronomy as I have picked up from the Sunday papers, Mars is noted for its canals. At certain seasons of the year a vast network of waterways seems to have been laid out upon its surface. The engineering feat appears so prodigious that

there may be reason to suspect that it could be a co-operative enterprise undertaken by a Socialist state. It could even be Communistic.

To our discomfiture, American officials put no barriers in the way of military men from Mars. Their scientists and philosophers would hardly fare as well. In fact, I missed Orson Welles on Sunday because I was talking to John Strachey, an economist who happens to be a citizen of that same planet of which we are a part.

It is his intention to lecture at American colleges, but he has not yet won legal admission and remains bound to silence on a temporary parole from Ellis Island. He came in a ship and not a cylinder and carries no death ray gun, but there are those to whom his presence strikes terror. They fear words and ideas, although there is a cherished American belief that these are the staples by which free men live. And so I say again that we have far more to fear from the silhouette of the censor than from the shadow of Orson Welles.

ON THE RECORD

By DOROTHY THOMPSON

Mr. Welles and Mass Delusion

ALL unwittingly Mr. Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater of the Air have made one of the most fascinating and important demonstrations of all time. They have proved that a few effective voices, accompanied by sound effects, can so convince masses of people of a totally unreasonable, completely fantastic proposition as to create nation-wide panic.

They have demonstrated more potently than any argument, demonstrated beyond question of a doubt, the appalling dangers and enormous effectiveness of popular and theatrical demagoguery.

They have cast a brilliant and cruel light upon the failure of popular education.

They have shown up the incredible stupidity, lack of nerve and ignorance of thousands.

They have proved how easy it is to start a mass delusion.

They have uncovered the primeval fears lying under the thinnest surface of the so-called civilized man.

They have shown that man, when the victim of his own gullibility, turns to the government to protect him against his own errors of judgment.

The newspapers are correct in playing up this story over every other news event in the world. It is the story of the century.

And far from blaming Mr. Orson Welles, he ought to be given a Congressional medal and a national prize for having made the most amazing and important of contributions to the social sciences. For Mr. Orson Welles and his theater have made a greater contribution to an understanding of Hitlerism, Mussolinism, Stalinism, anti-Semitism and all the other terrorisms of our times

than all the words about them that have been written by reasonable men. They have made the reductio ad absurdum of mass manias. They have thrown more light on recent events in Europe leading to the Munich pact than everything that has been said on the subject by all the journalists and commentators.

Hitler managed to scare all Europe to its knees a month ago, but he at least had an army and an air force to back up his shrieking words.

But Mr. Welles scared thousands into demoralization with nothing at all.

That historic hour on the air was an act of unconscious genius, performed by the very innocence of intelligence.

Nothing whatever about the dramatization of the "War of the Worlds" was in the least credible, no matter at what point the hearer might have tuned in. The entire verisimilitude was in the names of a few specific places. Monsters were depicted of a type that nobody has ever seen, equipped with "rays" entirely fantastic; they were described as "straddling the Pulaski Skyway" and throughout the broadcast they were referred to as Martians, men from another planet.

A twist of the dial would have established for anybody that the national catastrophe was not being noted on any other station. A second of logic would have dispelled any terror. A notice that the broadcast came from a non-existent agency would have awakened skepticism.

A reference to the radio program would have established that the "War of the Worlds" was announced in advance.

The time element was obviously lunatic.

Listeners were told that "within two hours three million people have moved out of New York"—an obvious impossibility for the most dis-

ciplined army moving exactly as planned, and a double fallacy because, only a few minutes before, the news of the arrival of the monster had been announced.

And of course it was not even a planned hoax. Nobody was more surprised at the result than Mr. Welles. The public was told at the beginning, at the end and during the course of the drama that it was a drama.

But eyewitnesses presented themselves; the report became second hand, third hand, fourth hand, and became more and more credible, so that nurses and doctors and National Guardsmen rushed to defense.

When the truth became known the reaction was also significant. The deceived were furious and of course demanded that the state protect them, demonstrating that they were incapable of relying on their own judgment.

Again there was a complete failure of logic. For if the deceived had thought about it they would realize that the greatest organizers of mass hysterias and mass delusions today are states using the radio to excite terrors, incite hatreds, inflame masses, win mass support for policies, create idolatries, abolish reason and maintain themselves in power.

The immediate moral is apparent if the whole incident is viewed in reason: no political body must ever, under any circumstances, obtain a monopoly of radio.

The second moral is that our popular and universal education is failing to train reason and logic, even in the educated.

The third is that the popularization of science has led to gullibility and new superstitions, rather than to skepticism and the really scientific attitude of mind.

The fourth is that the power of mass suggestion is the most potent force today and that the political demagogue is more powerful than all the economic forces.

For, mind you, Mr. Welles was managing an obscure program, competing with one of the most popular entertainments on the air!

The conclusion is that the radio must not be used to create mass prejudices and mass divisions and schisms, either by private individuals or by government or its agencies, or its officials, or its opponents.

If people can be frightened out of their wits by mythical men from Mars, they can be frightened into

fanaticism by the fear of Reds, or convinced that America is in the hands of sixty families, or aroused to revenge against any minority, or terrorized into subservience to leadership because of any imaginable menace.

* * *

The technique of modern mass politics calling itself democracy is to create a fear—a fear of economic royalists, or of Reds, or of Jews, or of starvation, or of an outside enemy—and exploit that fear into obtaining subservience in return for protection.

I wrote in this column a short time ago that the new warfare was

waged by propaganda, the outcome depending on which side could first frighten the other to death.

The British people were frightened into obedience to a policy a few weeks ago by a radio speech and by digging a few trenches in Hyde Park, and afterward led to hysterical jubilation over a catastrophic defeat for their democracy.

But Mr. Welles went all the politicians one better. He made the scare to end scares, the menace to end menaces, the unreason to end unreason, the perfect demonstration that the danger is not from Mars but from the theatrical demagogue.

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Mars Radio Play Wins Prize

Orson Welles Gets It—a Lollipop—From Students at Brown University.

Orson Welles, who panicked America Sunday night with his *Monsters of Mars* program, was today presented with the P. T. Barnum Memorial Award, a lollipop, annually given by Brown University at Providence, R. I., to "that individual who best plays the American public for the suckers they really are."

An editorial in the *Brown Daily Herald*, the undergraduate newspaper, announcing the award, exclaimed that "The American public has done it again! P. T. Barnum is a master of understatement."

"Orson Welles, whose claim to fame used to be that he threw a new light on Shakespeare's plays, has left this earth for wider spaces," the editorial continued.

"He landed his army of Martians on the Jersey mud flats and frightened an entire nation out of a night's sleep.

"In recognition of his feat the *Brown Daily Herald* takes pleasure in presenting to Mr. Welles the P. T. Barnum Memorial award, given annually to that individual who best plays the American public for the suckers they really are.

Suggests a Job for Him.

The *Daily Herald* also recommends:

"That because Mr. Welles can get so many people so excited over so little, President Roosevelt appoint him Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda;

"That Mr. Welles be cited by the governments of Japan, Germany and Italy because he can frighten the American public more than their combined armies;

"And that every person who complains to the Federal Communications Commission about the broad-

cast be awarded a Buck Rogers Air Gun."

At Princeton University four undergraduates immediately formed the League for Interplanetary Defense," of which they invited Orson Welles to be honorary leader.

Among other things the league proposes that "an embargo be placed on all Martial music, an investigation of interplanetary spy activities be conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and that the United States be criss-crossed with Maginot lines to insure safety from without."

ORSON WELLES EXPLAINS . . .

No more interesting interview was ever given than that granted to the press on Monday, Oct. 31, the day after the hoax broadcast, by Orson Welles, who played Doctor Pierson, who adapted the novel to radio, and who directs the Mercury Theater. He entered the interview room, unshaven since Saturday, eyes red from lack of sleep, read a prepared statement, and then answered questions.

Question: Were you aware of the terror such a broadcast would stir up? **Answer:** Definitely not. The technique I used was not original with me. It was not even new. I anticipated nothing unusual.

Question: Would you do the show over again? **Answer:** I won't say that I won't follow this technique again, as it is a legitimate dramatic form.

Question: When were you first aware of the trouble caused? **Answer:** Immediately after the broadcast was finished when people told me of the large number of phone calls received.

Welles said that at 8:38 EST, the program's producer asked him to be less facetious. As a result, he began to read his lines with more vigor. Taylor stated that he knew of audience reaction before the broadcast was over.

Question: Should you have toned down the language of the drama? **Answer:** No. You don't play murder in soft words.

Question: Why was the story changed to put in names of American cities and government officers. **Answer:** H. G. Wells used real cities in Europe, and to make the play more acceptable to American listeners we used real cities in America. Of course, I'm terribly sorry now.

THIS IS THE ORSON WELLES BROADCAST THAT HOAXED AMERICA

Here follows the script of a historical broadcast. Nothing ever put on the air has stirred up such a tempest of both indignation and amusement. When, on the evening of October 30, Orson Welles and his Mercury Theater players stood before the mike with the script of a dramatization of a Mr. H. G. Wells novel called "The War of the Worlds," they were anxious about the public's reception because they were afraid the book was "too old-fashioned." They thought the hackneyed theme of "men from Mars" might drive all their listeners away. But they forgot that the world was only two short weeks from a heart-breaking war scare, forgot that millions of Charlie McCarthy's listeners would tune away from him and therefore give their ears to the Mercury Theater only after the stage had been set. They reckoned without placing full value on their own acting ability and the frightening potency of the devices with which Mr. Welles had adapted "The War of the Worlds." The broadcast is history. What its eventual result will be we do not know. More time must pass and government officials and broadcasters must study again and again the innocent causes and the unlooked-for consequences of this famous program. So, here it is . . .

ANNOUNCER: The Columbia Broadcasting System and its affiliated stations present Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air in "The War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and Gentlemen: The director of the Mercury Theater and star of these broadcasts, Orson Welles . . .

WELLES: We know that in the early years of the twentieth century this world was being watched closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own. We know now that as human beings busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency people went to and fro over the earth about their little affairs, serene in the assurance of their dominion over this small spinning fragment of solar driftwood which by

chance or design man has inherited out of the dark mystery of time and space. Yet across an immense ethereal gulf, minds that are to our minds as ours are to the beasts in the jungle, intellects vast, cool and unsympathetic regarded this earth with envious eyes and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. In the thirty-ninth year of the twentieth century came the great disillusionment.

It was near the end of October. Business was better. The war scare was over. More men were back at work. Sales were picking up. On this particular evening, October 30, the Crossley service estimated that thirty-two million people were listening in on radios.

PROGRAM FADES TO AN ANNOUNCER GIVING A WEATHER REPORT: . . . for the next twenty-four hours not much change in temperature. A slight atmospheric disturbance of undetermined origin is reported over Nova Scotia, causing a low-pressure area to move down rather rapidly over the northeastern states, bringing a forecast of rain, accompanied by winds of light gale force. Maximum temperature 66 . . . minimum 48. This weather report comes to you from the Government Weather Bureau.

. . . We now take you to the Meridian Room in the Hotel Park Plaza in downtown New York, where you will be entertained by the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra.

(SPANISH THEME SONG . . . FADES.)

ANNOUNCER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. From the Meridian Room in the Park Plaza in New York City, we bring you the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra. With a touch of the Spanish, Ramon Raquello leads off with La Cumparsita. (PIECE STARTS PLAYING.)

ANOTHER ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News. At twenty minutes before eight, central time, Professor Farrell of the Mount Jennings Observatory, Chicago, Illinois, reports observing several explosions of incandescent gas, occurring at regular intervals on the planet Mars. The spectroscope indicates the gas to be hydrogen and moving towards the earth with enormous velocity. Professor Pierson

of the observatory at Princeton confirms Farrell's observation, and describes the phenomenon as (QUOTE) like a jet of blue flame shot from a gun. (UNQUOTE.) We now return you to the music of Ramon Raquello, playing for you in the Meridian Room of the Park Plaza Hotel, situated in downtown New York.

(MUSIC PLAYS FOR A FEW MOMENTS UNTIL PIECE ENDS . . . SOUND OF APPLAUSE)—CUE TO

Now a tune that never loses favor, the ever popular "Star Dust," Ramon Raquello and his orchestra . . . (MUSIC).

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, following on the news given in our bulletin a moment ago, the Government Meteorological Bureau has requested the large observatories of the country to keep an astronomical watch on any further disturbances occurring on the planet Mars. Due to the unusual nature of this occurrence, we have arranged an interview with the noted astronomer, Professor Pierson, who will give us his views on this event. We are ready now to take you to the Princeton Observatory at Princeton, where Carl Phillips, our commentator, will interview Professor Richard Pierson, famous astronomer. We take you now to Princeton, New Jersey.

(There follows an interview in which Professor Pierson explains that although Mars is popularly supposed to be inhabited, it probably is not; and that it is approximately forty million miles from the earth.) During the interview a message arrives from a New York scientist stating that his seismograph has registered a shock of earthquake intensity within a radius of twenty miles of Princeton. Professor Pierson is asked to investigate. The program is switched back to the New York studio.)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, here is the latest bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News. Toronto, Canada. Professor Morse of Macmillan University reports observing a total of three explosions on the planet Mars, between the hours of 7:45 p.m. and 9:20 p.m. eastern standard time. This confirms earlier reports received from American observatories. Now, near home, comes a special announcement from Trenton, New Jersey. It is reported that at 8:50 p.m.,

a huge flaming object, believed to be a meteorite, fell on a farm in the neighborhood of Grovers Mill, New Jersey, twenty-two miles from Trenton. The flash in the sky was visible within a radius of several hundred miles and the noise of the impact was heard as far north as Elizabeth. We have dispatched a special mobile unit to the scene, and will have our commentator, Mr. Phillips, give you a word description as soon as he can reach there from Princeton. In the meantime, we take you to the Hotel Martinet in Brooklyn, where Bobby Mill-ette and his orchestra are offering a program of dance music.

(SWING BAND FOR 20 SECONDS . . . THEN CUT.)

ANNOUNCER: We take you now to Grovers Mill, New Jersey.

(CROWD NOISES . . . POLICE SIRENS.)

PHILLIPS: Ladies and gentlemen, this is Carl Phillips again, at the Wil-muth farm, Grovers Mill, New Jersey. Professor Pierson and myself made the eleven miles from Princeton in ten minutes. Well, I . . . I hardly know where to begin, to paint for you a word-picture of the strange scene before my eyes, like something out of a modern Arabian Nights. Well, I just got here. I haven't had a chance to look around yet. I guess that's it. Yes, I guess that's the . . . thing, directly in front of me, half buried in a vast pit. Must have struck with terrific force. The ground is covered with splinters of a tree it must have struck on its way down. What I can see of the . . . object itself doesn't look very much like a meteor, at least not the meteors I've seen. It looks more like a huge cylinder. It has a diameter of . . . what would you say, Professor Pierson?

PIERSON (OFF): About thirty yards.

PHILLIPS: About thirty yards . . . The metal on the sheath is . . . well, I've never seen anything like it. The color is sort of yellowish-white. Curious spectators now are pressing close to the object in spite of the efforts of the police to keep them back. They're getting in front of my line of vision. Would you mind standing on one side, please.

COP: One side, there. One side!

PHILLIPS: I wish I could convey the atmosphere . . . the background of this . . . fantastic scene. Hundreds of cars are parked in a field in back of us. Police are trying to rope off the roadway leading into the farm. But it's no use. They're breaking right through. Their headlights throw an enormous spot on the pit where the object's half buried. Some of the more daring souls are venturing near the edge. Their silhouettes stand out against the metal sheen.

(FAINT HUMMING SOUND.)

One man wants to touch the thing . . . he's having an argument with a policeman. The policeman wins . . . Now, ladies and gentlemen, there's something I haven't mentioned in all this excitement, but it's becoming more distinct. Perhaps you've caught it already on your radio. Listen: (LONG PAUSE) . . . Do you hear it? It's a curious humming sound that seems to come from inside the object. I'll move the microphone nearer. Here,

(PAUSE) Now we're not more than twenty-five feet away. Can you hear it now? Oh, Professor Pierson!

PIERSON: Yes, Mr. Phillips?

PHILLIPS: Can you tell us the meaning of that scraping noise inside the Thing?

PIERSON: Possibly the unequal cooling of its surface.

PHILLIPS: Do you still think it's a meteor, Professor?

PIERSON: I don't know what to think. The metal casing is definitely extra-terrestrial . . . not found on this earth. Friction with the earth's atmosphere usually tears holes in a meteorite. This thing is smooth and, as you can see, of cylindrical shape.

PHILLIPS: Just a minute! Something's happening! Ladies and gentlemen, this is terrific! This end of the thing is beginning to flake off! The top is beginning to rotate like a screw! The thing must be hollow!

VOICES: She's a-movin'! Look, the darn thing's unscrewing! Keep back, there! Keep back, I tell you. Maybe there's men in it trying to escape! It's red hot, they'll burn to a cinder! Keep back there! Keep those idiots back!

(SUDDENLY THE CLANKING SOUND OF A HUGE PIECE OF FALLING METAL.)

VOICES: She's off! The top's loose! Look out there! Stand back!

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the most terrifying thing I have ever witnessed . . . Wait a minute, someone's crawling out of the hollow top. Someone or . . . something. I can see peering out of that black hole two luminous disks . . . are they eyes? It might be a face. It might be . . .

(SHOUT OF AWE FROM THE CROWD.)

Good heavens, something's wriggling out of the shadow like a gray snake. Now it's another one, and another. They look like tentacles to me. There, I can see the thing's body. It's large as a bear and it glistens like wet leather. But that face. It . . . it's indescribable. I can hardly force myself to keep looking at it. The eyes are black and gleam like a serpent. The mouth is V-shaped with saliva dripping from its rimless lips that seem to quiver and pulsate. The monster or whatever it is can hardly move. It seems weighed down by . . . possibly gravity or something. The thing's rais-

ing up. The crowd falls back. They've seen enough. This is the most extraordinary experience. I can't find words . . . I'm pulling this microphone with me as I talk. I'll have to stop the description until I've taken a new position. Hold on, will you please, I'll be back in a minute.

(FADE INTO PIANO.)

ANNOUNCER: We are bringing you an eye-witness account of what's happening on the Wil-muth farm, Grovers Mill, New Jersey.

(MORE PIANO.)

We now return you to Carl Phillips at Grovers Mill.

PHILLIPS: Ladies and gentlemen (am I on?), ladies and gentlemen, here I am, back of a stone wall that adjoins Mr. Wil-muth's garden. From here I get a sweep of the whole scene. I'll give you every detail as long as I can talk. As long as I can see. More state police have arrived. They're

drawing up a cordon in front of the pit, about thirty of them. No need to push the crowd back now. They're willing to keep their distance. The captain is conferring with someone. We can't quite see who. Oh yes, I believe it's Professor Pierson. Yes, it is. Now they've parted. The Professor moves around one side, studying the object, while the captain and two policemen advance with something in their hands. I can see it now. It's a white handkerchief tied to a pole . . . a flag of truce. If those creatures know what that means . . . what anything means! . . . Wait! Something's happening!

(HISSING SOUND FOLLOWED BY A HUMMING THAT INCREASES IN INTENSITY.)

A humped shape is rising out of the pit. I can make out a small beam of light against a mirror. What's that? There's a jet of flame springing from that mirror, and it leaps right at the advancing men. It strikes them head on! Good Lord, they're turning into flame!

(SCREAMS AND UNEARTHLY SHRIEKS.)

Now the whole field's caught fire. (EXPLOSION.) The woods . . . the barns . . . the gas tanks of automobiles . . . it's spreading everywhere. It's coming this way. About twenty yards to my right . . .

(CRASH OF MICROPHONE . . . THEN DEAD SILENCE . . .)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, due to circumstances beyond our control, we are unable to continue the broadcast from Grovers Mill. Evidently there's some difficulty with our field transmission. However, we will return to that point at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, we have a late bulletin from San Diego, California. Professor Indellkoffer, speaking at a dinner of the California Astronomical Society, expressed the opinion that the explosions on Mars are undoubtedly nothing more than severe volcanic disturbances on the surface of the planet. We continue now with our piano interlude.

(PIANO . . . THEN CUT.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I have just been handed a message that came in from Grovers Mill by telephone. Just a moment. At least forty people, including six state troopers, lie dead in a field east of the village of Grovers Mill, their bodies burned and distorted beyond all possible recognition. The next voice you hear will be that of Brigadier General Montgomery Smith, Commander of the State Militia at Trenton, New Jersey.

SMITH: I have been requested by the Governor of New Jersey to place the counties of Mercer and Middlesex as far west as Princeton, and east to Jamesburg, under martial law. No one will be permitted to enter this area except by special pass issued by state or military authorities. Four companies of State Militia are proceeding from Trenton to Grovers Mill, and will aid in the evacuation of homes within the range of military operations. Thank you.

ANNOUNCER: You have just been listening to General Montgomery Smith commanding the State Militia at Trenton. In the meantime, further details of the catastrophe at Grovers Mill are coming in. The strange crea-

tures, after unleashing their deadly assault, crawled back in their pit and made no attempt to prevent the efforts of the firemen to recover the bodies and extinguish the fire. Combined fire departments of Mercer County are fighting the flames, which menace the entire countryside.

We have been unable to establish any contact with our mobile unit at Grovers Mill, but we hope to be able to return you there at the earliest possible moment. In the meantime we take you—uh, just one moment, please.

(LONG PAUSE.)
(WHISPER.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I have just been informed that we have finally established communication with an eyewitness of the tragedy. Professor Pierson has been located at a farmhouse near Grovers Mill where he has established an emergency observation post. As a scientist, he will give you his explanation of the calamity. The next voice you hear will be that of Professor Pierson, brought to you by direct wire. Professor Pierson.

PIERSON: Of the creatures in the rocket cylinder at Grovers Mill, I can give you no authoritative information—either as to their nature, their origin, or their purposes here on earth. Of their destructive instrument, I might venture some conjectural explanation. For want of a better term, I shall refer to the mysterious weapon as a heat-ray. It's all too evident that these creatures have scientific knowledge far in advance of our own. It is my guess that in some way they are able to generate an intense heat in a chamber of practically absolute nonconductivity. This intense heat they project in a parallel beam against any object they choose, by

means of a polished parabolic mirror of unknown composition, much as the mirror of a lighthouse projects a beam of light. That is my conjecture of the origin of the heat-ray . . .

ANNOUNCER: Thank you, Professor Pierson. Ladies and gentlemen, here is a bulletin from Trenton. It is a brief statement informing us that the charred body of Carl Phillips has been identified in a Trenton Hospital. Now here's another bulletin from Washington, D. C. Office of the director of the National Red Cross reports ten units of Red Cross emergency workers have been assigned to the headquarters of the State Militia stationed outside of Grovers Mill, New Jersey. Here's a bulletin from State Police, Princeton Junction. The fires at Grovers Mill and vicinity now under control. Scouts report all quiet in the pit, and no sign of life appearing from the mouth of the cylinder . . . And now ladies and

gentlemen, we have a special statement from Mr. Harry McDonald, vice president in charge of operations.

(Talks are then made by McDonald, stating all radio has been turned over to the State Militia. A Captain Lansing of the Signal Corps states that the situation is well in hand. His troops

are advancing, seven thousand strong, against the handful of invaders and their metal cask. He concludes:)

LANSING: But wait. I see something on top of the cylinder. It's something moving . . . solid metal . . . kind



Orson Welles: "I am terribly sorry . . ."

of a shieldlike affair rising up out of the cylinder. It's going higher and higher. Why, it's standing on legs . . . actually rearing up on a sort of metal framework. Now it's reaching above the trees and the searchlights are on it. Hold on.

(There follows further description of the battle between the Thing and the soldiers, the dreadful heat-ray, invincible. Then a break in his talk . . .)

Editor's note: The following announcement, a part of the dramatization, is probably largely responsible for the panic among certain listeners, inasmuch as persons just tuning to the broadcast would have no choice but to think that they were hearing news dispatches. The added speech by the Secretary of the Interior gave a shuddery authenticity and awfulness to the "realistic" treatment.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, I have a grave announcement to make. Incredible as it may seem, both the observations of science and the evidence of our eyes lead to the inescapable assumption that those strange beings who landed in the Jersey farmlands tonight are the vanguard of an invading army from the planet Mars.

The battle which took place tonight at Grovers Mill has ended in one of the most startling defeats ever suffered by an army in modern times; seven thousand men armed with rifles and machine-guns pitted against a single fighting machine of the invaders from Mars. 120 known survivors. The rest strewn over the battle area from Grovers Mill to Plainsboro, crushed and trampled to death under the metal feet of the monster, or burned to cinders by its heat-ray. The monster is now in control of the middle section of New Jersey and has effectively cut the state through its center. Communication lines are down from Pennsylvania to the Atlantic Ocean. Railroad tracks are torn and service from New York to Philadelphia discontinued, except routing some of the trains through Allentown and Phoenixville. Highways to the north, south and west are clogged with frantic hu-

man traffic. Police and army reserves are unable to control the mad flight. By morning the fugitives will have swelled Philadelphia, Camden and Trenton, it is estimated, to twice their normal population. At this time martial law prevails throughout New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. We take

you now to Washington for a special broadcast on the national emergency . . . the Secretary of the Interior . . .

SECRETARY: Citizens of the nation. I shall not try to conceal the gravity of the situation that confronts the country, nor the concern of your government in protecting the lives and property of its people. However, I wish to impress upon you—private citizens and public officials, all of you—the urgent need of calm and resourceful action. Fortunately, this formidable enemy is still confined to a comparatively small area, and we may place our faith in the military forces to keep them there. In the meantime, placing our faith in God, we must continue the performance of our duties each and every one of us, so that we may confront this destructive adversary with a nation united, courageous, and consecrated to the preservation of human supremacy on this earth. I thank you.

ANNOUNCER: You have just heard the Secretary of the Interior speaking from Washington. Bulletins too numerous to read are piling up in the studio here. We are informed that the central portion of New Jersey is blacked out from radio communication due to the effect of the heat-ray upon power lines and electrical equipment. Here is a special bulletin from New York. Cables received from English, French, German scientific bodies offering assistance. Astronomers report continued gas outbursts at regular intervals on planet Mars. Majority voice opinion that enemy will be reinforced by additional rocket machines. Attempts made to locate Professor Pierson of Princeton, who has observed Martians at close range. It is feared he was lost in recent battle. LANGHAM FIELD, VIRGINIA—Scouting planes! report three Martian machines visible above tree-tops, moving north towards Summerville with population fleeing ahead of them. Heat-ray not in use. Although advancing at express-train speed, invaders pick their way carefully. They seem to be making conscious effort to avoid destruction of cities and countryside. However, they stop to uproot power lines, bridges, and railroad tracks. Their apparent objective is to crush resistance, paralyze communication, and disorganize human society.

Here is a bulletin from Basking Ridge, New Jersey—Coon-hunters have stumbled on a second cylinder, similar to the first, embedded in the great swamp twenty miles south of Morristown. U. S. Army field-pieces are proceeding from Newark to blow up second invading unit before cylinder can be opened and the fighting machine rigged. They are taking up position in the foothills of Watchung Mountains. Another bulletin from Langham Field, Virginia—Scouting planes report enemy machines, now three in number, increasing speed northward, kicking over houses and trees in their evident haste to form a conjunction with their allies south of Morristown. Machines also sighted by telephone operator east of Middlesex, within ten miles of Plainfield. Here's a bulletin from Winston Field, Long Island—Fleet of army bombers carrying heavy explosives flying north in pursuit of enemy. Scouting planes act as guides. They

keep speeding enemy in sight. Just a moment, please. Ladies and gentlemen, we've run special wires to the artillery line in adjacent villages to give you direct reports in the zone of the advancing enemy. First we take you to the battery of the 22nd Field Artillery, located in the Watchung Mountains.

(Listeners hear an officer giving directions to a gunner as they fire at the Martians. The Martians reply with gas which routes the army. Next voice is that of an army aviator in a plane off Bayonne, New Jersey. He is in command of eight bombers. They sight

the enemy and wheel to attack. The Martians spray them with flame, annihilating them. The play switches to various radio operators giving news of the attack, news of the Martians advancing on New York, then fades to an announcer back in New York.)

ANNOUNCER: I'm speaking from the roof of Broadcasting Building, New York City. The bells you hear are ringing to warn the people to evacuate the city as the Martians approach. Estimated in last two hours, three million people have moved out along the roads to the north Hutchison River Parkway, still kept open for motor traffic. Avoid bridges to Long Island . . . hopelessly jammed. All communication with Jersey shore closed ten minutes ago. No more defenses. Our army wiped out . . . artillery, air force, everything wiped out. This may be the last broadcast. We'll stay here to the end . . . People are holding service below us . . . in the cathedral.

(VOICES SINGING HYMN.)

Now I look down the harbor. All manner of boats, overloaded with fleeing population, pulling out from docks.

(SOUND OF BOAT WHISTLES.)

Streets are all jammed. Noise in crowds like New Year's Eve in city. Wait a minute . . . Enemy now in sight above the Palisades. Five great machines. First one is crossing river. I can see it from here, wading the Hudson like a man wading through a brook . . . A bulletin's handed me . . . Martian cylinders are falling all over the country. One outside Buffalo, one in Chicago, St. Louis . . . seem to be timed and spaced . . . Now the first machine reaches the shore. He stands watching, looking over the city. His steel, cowlish head is even with the skyscrapers. He waits for the others. They rise like a line of new towers on the city's West Side . . . Now they're lifting their metal hands. This is the end now. Smoke comes out . . . black smoke, drifting over the city. People in the streets see it now. They're running towards the East River . . . thousands of them, dropping in like rats. Now the smoke's spreading faster. It's reached Times Square. People trying to run away from it, but it's no use. They're falling like flies. Now the smoke's crossing Sixth Avenue . . . Fifth Avenue . . . 100 yards away . . . it's fifty feet . . .

VOICE OF RADIO OPERATOR: 2X2L calling CQ. 2X2L calling CQ. 2X2L calling CQ . . . New York. Isn't there anyone on the air? Isn't there anyone . . . 2X2L—

(MIDDLE BREAK)

ANNOUNCER: You are listening to a CBS presentation of Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air in an original dramatization of "The

War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells. The performance will continue after a brief intermission.

This is the COLUMBIA . . . BROADCASTING SYSTEM.

ANNOUNCER: "The War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells, starring Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air . . .

(MUSIC.)

Editor's note: At this point, after approximately thirty minutes of broadcasting, the mischief had been done. Listeners were in panic, police stations were besieged, eastern telephone exchanges were jammed, New Jersey highways were a shambles. Not in our time has any misunderstanding spread with such prairie-fire rapidity. From this time on, sensible listeners were quick to perceive that the words they were hearing was not news but fiction. Because of its interest, we continue the story to its end in condensed form.

PIERSON: As I set down these notes on paper, I'm obsessed by the thought that I may be the last living man on earth. I have been hiding in this empty house near Grovers Mill—a small island of daylight cut off by the black smoke from the rest of the world. I look down at my blackened hands, my torn shoes, my tattered clothes, and I try to connect them with a professor who lives at Princeton and who on the night of October 20, glimpsed through his telescope an orange splash of light on a distant planet. In writing down my daily life I tell myself I

shall preserve human history between the dark covers of this little book . . . But to write I must live, and to live I must eat . . . I find moldy bread in the kitchen, and an orange not too spoiled to swallow. I keep watch at the window. From time to time I catch sight of a Martian above the black smoke.

Exhausted by terror, I fall asleep . . . It's morning. Sun streams in the window. The black cloud of gas has lifted. I venture from the house. No traffic. Here and there a wrecked car. I push on north. Next day I came to a city vaguely familiar in its contours, yet its buildings strangely dwarfed and levelled off, as if a giant had sliced off its highest towers with a capricious sweep of his hand. I found Newark, undemolished but humbled by some whim of the advancing Martians. Presently, with an odd feeling of being watched, I caught sight of something crouching in a doorway. I made a step towards it, and it rose up and became a man—a man, armed with a large knife.

STRANGER: Stop . . . Where did you come from?

PIERSON: I come from . . . many places. A long time ago from Princeton. Have you seen any Martians?

STRANGER: They've gone over to New York. At night the sky is alive with their lights. Just as if people were still living in it. By daylight you can't see them. Five days ago a couple of them carried something big

across the flats from the airport. I believe they're learning how to fly.

PIERSON: Then it's all over with humanity. Stranger, there's still you and I. Two of us left.

(They talk, the professor and the stranger. The stranger is an ex-artilleryman. He has thought it all out. He realizes that men don't know enough to fight the Martians but they can learn. He outlines his plans to live underground in the subways and in the tunnels where the Martians cannot find them, studying, learning. Then, when he gets enough good men together, they'll steal some of the Martians' own machines and turn the heat-ray guns on the Martians and wipe them out. But Professor Pierson wants none of that plan. He walks on through Holland Tunnel, under the Hudson, and arrives in New York City.)

I reached Fourteenth Street, and there again were black powder and several bodies, and an evil, ominous smell from the gratings of the cellars of some of the

houses. I wandered up through the Thirties and Forties; I stood alone on Times Square. I caught sight of a lean dog running down Seventh Avenue with a piece of dark-brown meat in his jaws, and a pack of starving mongrels at his heels. He made a wide circle around me, as though he feared

I might prove a fresh competitor. I walked up Broadway in the direction of that strange powder—past silent shop windows, displaying their mute wares to empty sidewalks—past the Capitol Theatre, silent, dark—past a shooting-gallery, where a row of empty guns faced an arrested line of wooden ducks. Near Columbus Circle I noticed models of 1939 motor cars in the show-rooms facing empty streets. From over the top of the General Motors Building, I watched a flock of black birds circling in the sky. I hurried on. Suddenly I caught sight of the hood of a Martian machine, standing somewhere in Central Park, gleaming in the late afternoon sun. An insane idea! I rushed recklessly across Columbus Circle and into the park. I climbed a small hill above the pond at 60th Street. From there I could see, standing in a silent row along the Mall, nineteen of those great metal Titans, their cowls empty, their steel arms hanging listlessly by their sides. I looked in vain for the monsters that inhabit those machines. Suddenly my eyes were attracted to the immense flock of black birds that hovered directly below me. They circled to the ground, and there before my eyes, stark and silent, lay the Martians, with the hungry birds pecking and tearing brown shreds of flesh from their dead bodies. Later, when their bodies were examined in laboratories, it was found that they were killed by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their systems were unprepared . . . slain after all man's defenses had failed, by the humblest thing that God in his wisdom put upon this earth.

Before the cylinder fell there was a general persuasion that through all the deep of space no life existed beyond the petty surface of our minute sphere. Now we see further. Dim and wonderful is the vision I have conjured up in my mind of life spreading slowly from this little seed-bed of the solar system throughout the inanimate vastness of sidereal space. But that is a remote dream. It may be, that the destruction of the Martians is only a reprieve. To them, and not to us is the future ordained perhaps.

Strange it now seems to sit in my peaceful study at Princeton writing down this last chapter of the record begun at a deserted farm in Grovers Mill. Strange to see from my window the university spires dim and blue through an April haze. Strange to watch children playing in the streets. Strange to see young people strolling on the green, where the new spring grass heals the last black scars of a bruised earth. Strange to watch the sight-seers enter the museum where the dissembled parts of a Martian machine are kept on public view.

WELLES: This is Orson Welles, ladies and gentlemen, out of character to assure you that the WAR OF THE WORLDS has no further significance than as the holiday offering it was intended to be. The Mercury Theater's own radio version of dressing up in a sheet and jumping out of a bush and saying Boo! Starting now, we couldn't soap all your windows and steal all your garden gates by tomorrow night . . . so we did the best next thing. We annihilated the world before your very ears and utterly destroyed the Columbia Broadcasting System. You will be relieved, I hope, to learn that we didn't mean it, and that both institutions are still open for business. So good-by, everybody, and remember, please, for the next day or so, the terrible lesson you learned tonight. That grinning, glowing, globular invader of your living-room is an inhabitant of the pumpkin patch, and if your door-bell rings and nobody's there, that was no Martian . . . it's Hallowe'en.

(CLOSING)

ANNOUNCER: Tonight the Columbia Broadcasting System, and its affiliated stations Coast to Coast, has brought you "The War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells . . . the seventeenth in its weekly series of dramatic broadcasts featuring Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air.

(THE END)

OPINIONS

"The United States must be the laughing-stock of Europe today. To populations who have really been endangered by air-raids or the immediate threat of air-raids, it will be to laugh that countless Americans were driven into a panic by a make-believe radio dramatization of an H. G. Wells gas attack on this planet by the Martians."—*Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, columnist.*

". . . I doubt that anything of the sort would have happened four or five months ago. The course of world history has affected national psychology. Jitters have come to roost. We have just gone through a laboratory demonstration of the fact that the peace of Munich hangs heavy over our heads, like a thundercloud . . . if many sane citizens believed that Mars had jumped us suddenly they were not quite as silly as they seemed."—*Heywood Brown, columnist.*

"Radio has no more right to present programs like that than someone has in knocking on our door and screaming . . . Programs like that are an excellent indication of the inadequacy of our present control over a marvelous facility."—*Senator Clyde L. Herring of Iowa.*

"I withhold final judgment until later. But a broadcast that creates such general panic and fear as this one is reported to have done is, to say the least, regrettable. The widespread public reaction to this broadcast as indicated by the press is another demonstration of the power and force of radio and points out again the serious public responsibility of those who are licensed to operate stations."—*Frank R. McNinch, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission.*

"It is not too much to say that the whole performance was monstrous and cruel. Certainly it was a monumental piece of bad judgment."—*The New York Herald-Tribune.*

"This incident illustrates the need for radio being in the hands of persons with proper judgment, proper perspective of the fitness of things in the fine sense of the qualities of broadcasting programs."—*Eugene O. Sykes of the Federal Communications Commission.*

"If so many people could be misled unintentionally, when the purpose was merely to entertain, what could designing politicians not do through control of broadcasting stations? The dictators of Europe use radio to make their people believe falsehoods. We want nothing like that here. Better have American radio remain free to make occasional blunders than start on a course that might, in time, deprive it of freedom to broadcast uncensored truth . . ."—*The New York World-Telegram.*

"Utmost caution should be utilized to avoid the danger of the commission censoring what shall and shall not be said over the radio. Furthermore, it is my opinion that the commission should proceed carefully in order that it will not discourage the presentation of the dramatic arts. It is essential that we encourage radio to make use of the dramatic arts and the artists of this country. The public does not want a spineless radio. It is also my opinion that, in any case, isolated incidents of poor program service do not of necessity justify the revocation of a station's license, particularly when such station has an otherwise excellent record of good public service. I do not include in this category, however, criminal action by broadcasting station licensees."—*T. A. M. Craven of the Federal Communications Commission.*

ENTR'ACTE of the CHARLES



INTERVIEW WITH SEYMOUR STERN

by Seymour Stern

FILM CULTURE here presents the second installment of the *Interview with Seymour Stern*. Due to difficulties and disagreements, Mr. Stern, in effect, "fired" all previous interviewers, so by way of solution, we decided to let him interview himself.

STERN: *What do you consider the proper scope and subject-matter of film criticism?*

STERN: Everything. This may sound abstract or seem too sweeping an answer, but if we examine it more closely, the sum total of its elements, I think, will be found to approximate "everything" — closely enough, at any rate, to justify use of the word.

Putting it in broad categoric terms, I would say that film criticism must or should concern itself with two essential objectives: (1) the motion picture as a medium of expression and communication; and (2) the content of the individual film and the content of each image, scene and sequence of the film. I am aware this imposes a burden on the critic, and even on the reviewer, but serious film criticism, film criticism worthy the name, must fulfill or realize primary functions and objectives along many lines: analytical, creative, cultural-intellectual, historical, ideological, and technical-esthetic. Such film criticism can no more be indifferently or lightly approached than can serious literary criticism, serious musical criticism or serious esthetic criticism devoted to any given art or medium. This simply means the individual critic should be richly informed ("educated," if you like) not only with respect to the screen as a medium but also with as vast a scope of subjects as possible. For the tremendous range, sweep and lightning change-of-scene which is the special property of cinema enables film creators to project sum-images of the world, its doings and its history, even within a single film, if they have the imagination and the skill to do it! Film critics in my opinion are under obligation to do endless research in the various subjects which may be encompassed in the films they analyze or review. How else are they to know whether the film under scrutiny is good, bad, indifferent, mediocre, or great? What other course is open to them to de-

termine whether the factual material presented in a given film is at least reasonably authentic, let alone accurate; or whether the interpretation, particularly in the case of historical films, is worthy of serious attention and thought — and this, regardless of whether the critic agrees with it or not?

To avoid further generalization, I will here give a few examples of the type of subject-matter that confronts film criticism with major problems of scope, research, interpretation and analysis:

(1) Recently, the film columns of Los Angeles newspapers announced that the Italian film producer, De Laurentiis, whose headquarters are at 1 Park Avenue, New York City, contemplates making a film in this country, based on the Sacco and Vanzetti case. I was happy to note that a film might actually be made on this case, which came to a tragic end in 1927 in Massachusetts, and that the names of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti would be revived and the Fascist-style injustice of which they were victims be recalled. But I was disturbed to read further that the film would "not editorialize," would "not take sides." Immediately, I asked myself: "How much does De Laurentiis really know about the Sacco-Vanzetti case? What is his attitude toward it? What is his purpose in making a film out of it? And how is it possible to make a film out of it that does not as a matter of course, by the very nature of the case and its history, take sides?" These questions led, in turn, to further ones: "How much would the current crop of film reviewers on the newspapers throughout the United States know about the Sacco-Vanzetti case? More disturbing still, how much would the audiences themselves know?" And so on.

All these and related questions disturbed me. I reflected, too, that not many of the younger generation know of the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and that, of those who have heard of it, it is doubtful whether they are aware of much more than merely the victims' names and the fact the the execution of both men touched off world-wide bitterness and commotion. It is worth recalling briefly the main facts of the case in order to highlight or illustrate some of the difficulties that would confront most film critics if they tried to assess the

merit or value of a film based on the subject.

Sacco and Vanzetti, a shoemaker and fish peddler, respectively, were militant union organizers in Massachusetts during an era which saw the vast majority of the American middle-class lined up in totalitarian style against labor and trade unions. During this period there were virtually no Communists. Labor leaders or union organizers of whom industry and the church—that is, the massed forces of organized religion, disapproved, were smeared as “Anarchists” or “agitators.” The standard smear-terms, “radicals” and “Reds,” were also used then, however. Of the so-called “average” Americans, probably not more than one out of ten could have explained the difference between an Anarchist and a Communist, and none could have cared less. “Our bourgeois barbarians,” as the late film critic, Harry Alan Potamkin, very aptly termed them, were so monotonously obsessed with their goddam baseball games, football games and other sports that they had no time, let alone interest, to pay the slightest attention to civil liberties, social justice, or class war. This interest was reserved to a militant and vocal minority, numbering perhaps a few million, but this minority was not powerful enough at the time to stay the hand of the ruling industrial autocracy and its fawning middle-class supporters. Indeed, up until the Big Crash and Great Depression of 1929, the myth was securely lodged in the alleged minds of the American people that the class struggle, or class war, did not exist in the United States — it was something that belonged to other countries but not here; and if there were strikes, lock-outs, riots, police brutality and similar annoyances outside the gates of the local Country Club, why — all this sort of thing was due to the subversive mischief of “agitators” or “radicals,” and of course they had to be put in their place. This could be jail or even the electric chair. And there were no more malignant agitators anywhere than the two Italians, Sacco and Vanzetti, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

As matters stood, the social, industrial and political autocracy that misruled the sovereign and unsavory state of Massachusetts was excessively annoyed, and very much disturbed, by the increasing success that Sacco and Vanzetti were enjoying in their union activities. And the autocracy was determined to get rid of them. This, it did.

To complicate life for Sacco and Vanzetti,

there was an added factor of what amounted to a species of racial or nationalist bigotry. There were many Italians in New England, particularly in Connecticut and Massachusetts, and they were almost entirely of the poorer class. They were also, for the most part, Roman Catholics (although Sacco and Vanzetti had long before freed themselves of religious superstition and affiliation), and so they incurred a triple contempt from the population at large: contempt of their poverty, their national origin, and of their religion. For the tight-lipped, frozen-faced New England Yankees were an ethnic majority and consisted, in the main, of the Anglo-Saxon, Puritan-Protestant, “one hundred percent American,” middle-class snobs. The top industrialists and bankers represented established wealth and constituted the Country-Club set, together with their fawning admirers, their golf-companions, military prima donnas, and a motley assortment of fur-coated rich men’s sons and daughters of the younger generation. Of course, there were masses of poverty-ridden Yankees, too—the political, economic, and social victims at the bottom of the pyramid, just as there were and always have been, in the American South and elsewhere. But it was the Italians of the region who bore the brunt of poverty, toil, exploitation, and contempt. They felt the whiplash of conservatism’s heartless inhumanity and contempt here exactly as the Negroes, the Mexicans, and the Chinese did in other sections of the country or, for that matter, up until the present truce, the Jews everywhere. And so it was the New England Italians who took a more active part in stirring rebellion against the Yankee overlords. The ethnic majority was an ethnic menace, and it took the view that anybody who wanted to “change things” should be put out of the way: for the ethnic majority, the only menace was a minority of non-conforming “foreigners.”

In 1920, at South Braintree, near Boston, a payroll robbery and double murder were committed. Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested and charged with the crime. Evidence establishing their whereabouts elsewhere, and their innocence, was thrown out of court. From the outset they were framed, railroaded and processed to their doom. As the case expanded over a seven-year period into a true ‘cause celebre’ of the first magnitude, some of the most prominent attorneys of the nation, and the American Civil Liberties Union, entered it on behalf of the Ital-

ian labor leaders. From that day to this the charges against Sacco and Vanzetti have never been proved. But this technical detail did not prevent the ruling autocracy from proceeding with its ideological determination and legalistic plans to exterminate these men for their real crime—political defiance and social rebellion, and so the autocracy brazenly defied world opinion. It got rid of Sacco and Vanzetti.

At the time the governmental and judicial murder occurred, the President of the United States was one, Calvin Coolidge, a chinless half-wit, of whom Alice Roosevelt Longworth made the definitive comment that he gave every evidence of having been weaned on a pickle. Coolidge had been governor of Massachusetts. He became president, because he had endeared himself to middle-class reactionaries throughout the country by breaking a policemen's strike in Boston.

Strike breakers and strikebreaking were fashionable and popular in the 1920s—a proof of patriotism. These were the 'Roaring 20s'—roaring with injustice, Ku Klux Klanism, lynching, police brutality, and ruthless persecution of Labor. This was the era, remember, in which millions of Americans admired the notorious Italian dictator, Mussolini, "Il Duce," the Fascist master-criminal and later the Butcher of Ethiopia and the helpful assassin, with Hitler and Franco, of the Spanish Republic—because he "made the trains run on time." Mussolini, who knifed his way to power in 1921, not only enjoyed the admiration of the American ruling class; he also stirred their envy by exterminating Italian labor leaders, radicals and assorted non-conformists through the infamous castor-oil torture and other methods of disposal, which later forced the Nazis to dream up new and original techniques of terror, torture and slaughter to save capitalism from the wrath of its victims.

Coolidge, however, was a pious prig, who could not afford to do anything along this line that did not appear, at least on the surface, "respectable." He himself was the very embodiment of the Respectables. Furthermore, his strikebreaking activities were almost the only sign of life he had ever shown, except later, when, as President, he had himself photographed with a group of Indians in the regalia of an Indian chief. The photograph, which became world-renowned, showed him fearfully huddled among the bewildered Indians, who stare at Coolidge

with unbelieving eyes. As a bit of unintended historical commentary, the picture represented a rare moment of Indian triumph over the white race. It demonstrated, too, that the empty solemnity of pickle-faced Coolidge personified, as nothing has done before or since, the colossal vacuity of conservatism and the Republican Party. However, Coolidge had one achievement to his credit: he rarely spoke, because he had nothing to say—or, as one commentator of the period later summed up Coolidge: "There was nothing in the head to transmit to the tongue"; and so, because of his virtually permanent silence, the tight-lipped Yankee minute-by-minute man created a soothing image of unconscious wisdom. Hence, when the hour of decision arrived for Sacco and Vanzetti, and the appeals and protests began to mount, "Silent Cal" remained silent; the image of pickled wisdom was preserved by the dead mouth; and the two Italian labor leaders went to their deaths on August 23, 1927, in the electric chair, the true symbol of Capitalism, victims of conservatism and middle-class Yankee "justice."

Finally, when all the appeals had fallen on deaf ears, as they went to their politically predetermined doom, Vanzetti, who was in my opinion the most distinguished person Italy ever sent to the New World, speaking for Sacco and himself, made the statement that sealed forever the moral guilt of Massachusetts, the nation, and the despotism of capitalist absolutism, and that imparted to the tragedy itself the quality of timeless nobility:

"If it had not been for this thing, I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as we now do by accident. Our words—our lives—our pains: nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph."

The Yankee barbarians did not have the last word, after all.

For the Sacco-Vanzetti case remains to this day a black and bloody blot not only on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts but on the United States as a nation. To this day neither

Massachusetts nor the United States has made amends, shown remorse, or confessed to the criminal guilt of the executions. Instead, conservatism has faithfully followed, like a blind and stupid serf, the biological reflex of down-East Coolidge—the silence of the void. The case itself, however, continues to hold vital significance. It proved several things: (1) that it not only could happen here, but did; (2) that when a ruling class and a brainwashed population are determined to get rid of militant non-conformists in their midst, no amount of twaddle about “justice,” “decency,” “fair play,” “democracy,” “civil rights” or what-have-you, can stop them from doing so; and (3) that the class whose only allegiance and loyalty are to Profit will not be moved by “world opinion,” when its power and tyranny are challenged and exposed. Clear proof of this came approximately three decades later, when the same type of frame-up, railroad-ing and judicial lynching resulted in California’s savage murder of Caryl Chessman, in defiance of recurrent world-wide protests. Chessman was not even charged with murder, but he was guilty of one “crime” that paralleled the real offense committed by Sacco and Vanzetti—proud defiance of the police, judiciary, and governmental bureaucracy (he made fools out of the judiciary); and one other “crime,” which did not enter the Sacco-Vanzetti case—his unorthodox (i. e., non-puritanical) sex-conduct, whether actual or trumped-up, as charged. Add to this his avowed agnosticism (an unofficial crime in any church-ridden republic), and it is small wonder he was doomed from the start. Yet here, in the very recent Chessman case, the pattern of frame-up through execution, even allowing for variation in detail, was essentially the same as in the thirty-five-year old Sacco-Vanzetti case, so that the older case continues to hold for us a valid, contemporary standard of reference.

Now, as I reflected on the Sacco-Vanzetti case and at the same time contemplated the announcement that Producer De Laurentiis intends making a film about it, but that he will “not editorialize” or “take sides,” I could not help wondering just how objective such a film would prove to be, and whether the incredible agony and suffering of the two Italian victims of New England auto-cracy were merely to become entertainment-fodder or a Roman holiday (no pun intended) for the producers. How, for example, would De Laurentiis portray the notorious judge, Webster

Thayer, who, shortly before the conviction and swift execution, was overheard on the golf-links of his country-club to vow that he would “get those two wop bastards,” and had made various exhibitions of bigotry, intolerance and Nazi-type savagery? Again, how would De Laurentiis depict the role played in the case by the famous and heroic newspaper columnist, Heywood Broun? Broun played the same part here that Zola had performed in France during the Dreyfus case. It was Heywood Broun who reported Thayer’s murderous comment and intent; he also wrote one of the major classics of American journalism, a feature article on Judge Thayer that appeared in Broun’s column under the title, “The Thing.” Broun attacked Thayer, the Massachusetts judiciary and the New England ruling-class with such deadly accuracy and such telling effect, that he was fired from his newspaper, the New York World. This event started the decline of the World as a journal and at the same time led to the founding of the Newspaper Guild as perhaps Broun’s crowning achievement. Here again, I found myself wondering how De Laurentiis would depict these historic developments, all of which were a part of the Sacco-Vanzetti case, or whether he would consider their mere depiction as “editorializing.” Or is it possible to make such a film, based on such a case, and yet ignore its fundamental aspects, so that the final product is reduced on the screen to a “whodunit” formula?

Suppose you were a film critic or reviewer. Suppose you found yourself reviewing or assessing a film, any film, based on the timeless tragedy of Sacco and Vanzetti. For your own information, if not for that of your readers, would you know enough about the case to be able to estimate and judge what the makers of the film had or had not done with it? Would you know whether they had omitted the vital aspects that affected the liberties, and ultimately the lives, of the two victims? Would you be in a position to evaluate the re-creation (if any) of the environment and atmosphere of the historic period? As to the main figures and characters involved—Sacco and Vanzetti themselves; Thayer; Coolidge; the Country Club set; Broun; the American Civil Liberties Union; the attorneys, and others—would you know how these were depicted on the screen, if not in detail, at least in essence?

This is a timely and a fundamental example

of what I mean by the necessity of research and by the scope of film criticism in embracing the maximum possible knowledge of whatever subject a film presents. Without this knowledge and without the research, you could neither condemn the film nor praise it, because you would not know. Then you would be reduced to considering it purely as "entertainment"—that it, as amusement, and such consideration would not be film criticism but something else, belonging to another field; it would be an extension of the studio's publicity department.

(2) Here is another example of the proper scope and subject-matter of film criticism:

In 1951, MGM released its film, *Quo Vadis*, which, like more recent excrement along the same lines, *Ben Hur*, was loaded with the garbage of religious propaganda (vide, *FILM CULTURE*, No. 25, Summer, 1962, pp. 73-75). Bosley Crowther, screen editor of the *New York Times*, in the far-gone days of his sincerity, after examining the basic story and its film interpretation, wrote, in part:

" . . . the weakness of *QUO VADIS* as it is thrown at us in this age which has known holocausts more frightful than the single burning of Rome, slaughters more vast and horrifying than the clawing of a hundred people by lions: the story is downright childish and dull. The drama of individuals within the spectacle is a flop . . . Dismissing entirely the considerations which were applied even to Sienkiewicz's book when it was published — considerations as to its conception of Christianity, its interpretation of the pagan world, its historical portraits and its general distortion of truth — the conflict as shown in this picture is in the most hackneyed Hollywood style. It is typified by an enactment of the *Last Supper*, reproducing *Da Vinci's* masterpiece!"

*Bosley Crowther, New York Times,
November 8, 1951*

I find this very good screen criticism. It is not criticism of either esthetics or technique, but, what seems at least as important to me, of the content itself, and this, after all, is what the technique is designed to articulate, to interpret and to project. Furthermore, this type of criticism presupposes a working-knowledge of the content and its relational background. The knowledge, for example, that Sienkiewicz's book, when it originally appeared, was criticized — indeed, ridiculed, for "its conception of Christianity, its inter-

pretation of the pagan world, its historical portraits and its general distortion of truth," bears directly on a knowledge of whether or not the film made from the book duplicates or perpetuates the same misconceptions, misinterpretations, and distortions; it also imposes on the critic the necessity of knowing what the truth is or was; otherwise, how would he know whether it had been distorted?

Of even greater importance is the reminder (which, again, presupposes the critic's familiarity with the facts) that "this age . . . has known holocausts more frightful than the single burning of Rome, slaughters more vast and horrifying than the clawing of a hundred people by lions."

This is a clear reference ("this age") to the then recent overwhelming atrocities and horrendous barbarities perpetrated by the all-time murderers of humankind, the Fascists of Hitler's Germany. It can be assumed, however, that the critic for his own referential purposes would be sufficiently familiar with the horrors of Roman and early-Christian history to be in a position to furnish comparative estimates between these and the enormously greater and far more terrible barbarism inflicted some nineteen-hundred years later by the Fascist-Christians themselves. Whatever the subject depicted, the film critic is obligated to learn enough about it to write cogently on what the filmmakers have done with it. And in no areas of subject-matter is this obligation more binding, more imperative, than in the realms of both history and religious propaganda. Whether the film depicts the Spanish Inquisition or the massacre of the Huguenots; the wars of religion that racked all Europe throughout the Middle Ages or the ferocious pogroms against the Jews throughout the centuries; whether it shows the French Revolution or the American Civil War; the Fall of Babylon or the burning of "witches" in New England; or if the film merely picturizes the greatest lie ever told — film criticism is intellectually obligated to assess the content no less than the creative-esthetic treatment and technique. Both the discipline and the imperative of this approach fall heavily on film criticism, but the very scope of the screen's subject-potential as well as of its potential (as yet unexploited) subject-matter seems to me to render the task inescapable. It has seldom, if ever, been more so than today, when the so-called "entertainment-film" is, in reality and in substance, nothing more than a thinly disguised propaganda-film

for the dissemination of the standards, tenets and values of a status-quo, church-dominated society.

(3) If this conception of the scope and subject-matter of film criticism applies to the measurement or evaluation of the screen as a whole, it applies equally, and as a matter of course, to "specialized" fields of filmmaking like the documentary film. A simple example will serve to illustrate why.

Suppose, for example, you were assessing a documentary based on the public school system in the United States or, more specifically, perhaps, on the school system of California. Presumably there would be the usual views of school buildings, playgrounds, laboratory equipment, classrooms and the like. All this would be more or less in the nature of a filmed sightseeing tour or travelogue, and scenes of the ultramodern public schools in which such states as Arizona, Nevada and California abound, would be pretty, indeed.

But suppose the documentary went a little deeper and got into the curriculum. Would you know enough about this to judge whether it was at least "reasonably" authentic? The California junior-high schools and high schools, for example, are dedicated to an organized effort to turn out a generation of conforming conservatives, who will have the sense of the "good taste" (sic) never to ask embarrassing questions about the economic and social order or raise issues which by their very articulation might be suspected of being "subversive." California schools are also engaged in a campaign to restore Victorian standards of "manners" and dress, and the top administration of some of these schools are not above forcing regressive forms of clothes-fetishism on the student body (especially on the girls, who seem to get some of the junior-high school principals 'hot and bothered'). In fact, law suits are even now pending in a number of cases where authoritarian administrators have inflicted abuse and tyranny on female students, who naively believed the schools' own propaganda about "freedom" and so were accused of violating antique codes of Victorian behavior. In the era of the Cold War, when the United States is supposed to be fighting an idealistic battle against an alleged Communist "threat," the distance of the hem of a girl's skirt from the floor, the style of a girl's shoes, the wearing of

jeans, slacks, capris, and sweaters, all are issues of monumental world-shaking importance in the public-school regimentation-centers of California. The "image" they are trying to create and the social pattern they are trying to build are not of democracy but of an old-fashioned, discredited type of authoritarian republic. The John Birch Society and the parochial schools, though officially separate, have sunk their fangs deep into the California public school system.

More significant still is the recent introduction into the junior-high schools and high schools of compulsory courses in Fascist indoctrination. How would you evaluate a presentation of these in a documentary (if they were not concealed by omission) unless you knew, for example, that these courses are taught under the poetic title of "anti-Communism"? What basis of reference would you use, if such material were depicted and you tried to comment on it?

Here again, the subject-matter and the scope of film criticism parallel, topic by topic and inch by inch, the subject-matter and the scope of the individual film itself. No further requirements need be elucidated here.

(4) Finally, we need only mention the creative-esthetic and technical scope of film criticism. As film criticism has developed to date, this has, as was to be expected in the absence of free channels or "outlets," been overemphasized almost entirely to the exclusion of content. Yet it is the basis of serious-minded criticism of all art, whether it be music, photography, painting, sculpture, literature, or motion pictures. It is the point at which criticism may become a creative act, even while, if not because, it analyzes. But serious film criticism transcends mere film reviewing, and the field as a result is still almost pathetically young. The pioneer works which point the road to film criticism in the technical and esthetic domain are few, but they establish, both singly and collectively, a worthy fund of fundamental *critique*, from which much can be learned concerning the salient concepts, esthetic, functions, properties, structure, technique — in short, the *form*, of the film as an art and a medium of expression in all realms of subject-matter. They include such books or other writings as Vachel Lindsay's "The Art of the Moving Picture"; Eisenstein's "Film Form" and "The Film Sense"; Pudovkin's "Film Technique" and "Film Act-

ing"; Alexander Bakshy's essays, "The Cinematograph as Art," "The New Art of the Motion Picture" and "The Road to Art in the Moving Picture"; Rudolph Arnheim's "Film"; Raymond Spottiswoode's "A Grammar of the Film"; Ralph Block's definitive essay, "Not Theater, Not Literature, Not Painting"; Herman G. Scheffauer's treatise on "The Vivifying Space"; Kirk Bond's essay on "Formal Cinema"; Vladimir Nielsen's "The Cinema as a Graphic Art"; Hans Richter's "The Film As an Original Art Form"; Maya Deren's essay "Cinema As an Art Form"; Siegfried Kracauer's "Nature of Film"; Eric Elliott's "Anatomy of Motion Picture Art," Gilbert Seldes'

"The Movies and the Talkies"; Ernest Lindgren's "The Art of the Film," and others. These represent virtually all that we have of both exploratory and theoretical forays into the nature of the medium. Singly and collectively, they are guideposts on the road to understanding of the critical foundations of film culture.

ERRATA: In the first installment of Seymour Stern's Interview (Film Culture, No. 25, p. 87) we regret that a number of editorial and typographical errors were not corrected in time for publication.

FILM CULTURE

BOOKS

LESSONS WITH EISENSTEIN. By Vladimir Nizhny. Translated by Ivor Montague and Jay Leyda. 172 pp. Ill. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London 1962) 25s.

S. M. EISENSTEIN. By Barthelemy Amen-gual. (Premier Plan Series. SERDOC, B.P.3, Lyon-Prefecture, France) 111 pp. Ill. 4.50 NF.

S.M. EISENSTEIN'S SCREENPLAY: IVAN THE TERRIBLE. Translated by Ivor Montague and Herbert Marshall. Edited by Ivor Montague with an Introduction. 319 pp. Ill. (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1962) \$6.50.

GESCHICHTE DES FILMS. By Ulrich Gregor and Enno Patalas. 524 pp. Ill. (Sigbert Mohn Verlag, Gütersloh, Germany, 1962) 30.80 DM.

DICTIONNAIRE ILLUSTRE DU CINEMA. 388 pp. Ill. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 1962) 7.80 NF.

THE WESTERN. From Silents to Cinerama. By George N. Fenin and William K. Everson. 362 pp. Ill. (The Orion Press, New York, 1962) \$12.50.

L'EROTISME AU CINEMA. By Lo Duca. Vol. III. 250 pp. Ill. (Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Paris, 1962) 30 NF.

THE PLAYER, A Profile of an Art. By Lillian Ross & Helen Ross. Photographs by Lillian Ross. 437 pp. (Simon & Schuster, 1962) \$6.95.

You can be a film director without having the slightest idea of the principles taught by Eisenstein in film scripting and direction at the GIK (State Institute of Cinematography, Moscow) — a dubious distinction for which so many past and present directors notably qualify — but you will be that much less a director. Not that your style had to necessarily be like his (whose was?) but

that you had to use the forces of reason and intuition to their ultimate degrees to achieve the maximum eloquence. It is here that all the big names of the cinema qualify, however disparate their individual styles from Eisenstein. "Eisenstein prompted his students into seeking means for ever-profounder disclosures of the author's concept . . . teaching them how to stage dramatic content so that it unfolded in clear and vivid action." Thus the late Vladimir Nizhny, a student of Eisenstein, describes the master's goal. The book's four sections are divided into story, adaptation, action-planning, break-up into shots and arrangement of the action within the shot, with illustrations from Balzac's *Père Goriot*, Vandercook's *Black Majesty*, and Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment*. Nizhny took notes during the classes, even to reproducing E.'s blackboard drawings. The result is a jubilant book, for no one took the cinema more seriously than E., and to follow this brilliant and universal mind in all its coruscations is to realize how jejune the work of most film directors is. You can equate the flat-footed orthodoxy of most films with the fortunes they made (when they made them) and take consolation from that, if that's what you're after, e.g., still-born works whose glistening patina covers furtive *sottises*, mendacity, flummery — the outwardly respectable but inwardly epicene euphemisms that lie hidden under middle-class cant — and for which audiences will pay good, hard cash. But if it's cinema you're interested in, in its most intellectual, most aristocratic, sense, then see and re-see the work of the masters and read *Lessons With Eisenstein* so that you can instantly

recognize the valid works from the tumescent rodomontades. The book also contains a "Program for Teaching the Theory and Practice of Film Direction" by Eisenstein (which makes most film courses as currently given look like filmic equivalents of remedial reading) and very helpful notes. Best of all, the book is mercifully free of that mumbo-jumbo *a posteriori* theorizing that so often passes for profound stuff and, perhaps even better than that, the human Eisenstein emerges from these pages, despite the seriousness and high-level analyses of his class-room work, with something of the wit and irony that so endeared him to all fortunate enough to know him.

Latest volume in the excellent Premier Plan series from France is also on Eisenstein. There is a filmography, essential bibliography, a collection of excerpts from various analyses of the director's special theories (audio-visual counterpoint, principles of film form, montage of attractions, montage of music, color, etc.), detailed analyses of the construction of all his films, except *Strike* and *Bezhin Meadow*, analogies with Brecht, Byzantine and expressionistic art and a study of Tissé's contribution as cinematographer to Eisenstein's art. The volume ends with an essay on ciné-plastics. A book on the very highest level of seriousness of purpose, e.g., to dissect some of the multitudinous elements that went into forming the style of one of the cinema's authentic geniuses. Its density makes for necessarily slow reading but the effort is, of course, rewarding in the same proportion.

The screenplay of *Ivan The Terrible* was a happy thought for a book. It supplements handsomely the two Eisenstein screenplays already available in English, of *Old and New* and *Que Viva Mexico*. Again we see Eisenstein's graphic style as a scenarist. Like the previous scripts, *Ivan* is written like an epic poem in blank verse, and, although there are no camera indications as in the traditional screenplay, the writing is so vivid that we see in our mind's eye, knowing Eisenstein's style, what these images would look like on the screen. What makes this screenplay especially valuable historically is that it is the *entire* script, of the three parts, of which only two were actually filmed. What a beautiful script it is and what a pity we were never vouchsafed to see its final part. The illustrations, splendidly reproduced from stills, are supplemented by fascinating drawings by Eisenstein as studies for

the film before shooting. There is a very fine introduction by Ivor Montague, helpful notes on the translation, a transcript of the two parts as finally edited in relation to the original script (reel by reel), a preface by Eisenstein to his sketches for *Ivan* (which he called "visual stenograms"), an essay about marginal notes made by the director on his script in the course of shooting (illustrated with pages from the actual *Ivan* script containing these notes), finally a bibliography. In short, a perfect model of a book on such a subject, thrilling to read, both as literature and cinema, luxuriously illustrated and most helpfully annotated.

Geschichte des Films is a history of the motion pictures from 1895 to 1962, from Lumière and Méliès to *Guns of the Trees*, which is a lot of ground to cover even in 524 pages. There is an index of sources, a bibliography of books and articles, index of names, titles and illustrations, everything done with thorough German efficiency. Leading directors are individually discussed as their work comes up in the course of the cinema's history, as well as trends like "Der Neue Sachlichkeit," "Impressionism," "The Avant-Garde," "The Soviet Revolutionary Film," "Hollywood in the Twenties," "The Coming of Sound," "Neo-Realism," "The Nouvelle Vague," "The British Free Cinema," "The New York School," etc. Historical transitions are made between the various phases of the film's development. A solid, serious work, sometimes highly opinionated rather than eclectic, sometimes detailed and sometimes very sketchy indeed. Handsomely printed and bound with splendidly reproduced illustrations (fine copper-plate cuts, which is the best way to reproduce still reductions).

The *Dictionnaires Seghers* published in France on French writers, painters, composers, on science, mythology and now on the cinema, is one of the most felicitous examples of enlightening publishing ventures from *la ville lumière*. Small, compact, inexpensive, and copiously illustrated, they are models of their kind and ought to have their English counterparts here. The volume on the cinema is a biographical dictionary covering most of the names of actors, writers, directors, cameramen, etc., that would readily come to mind. Highly condensed as to factual data, the writing and critical estimations are on a very high level. The only flaw is the inclusion of far too many unfamiliar (and with reason) names

and the resultant exclusion of as many familiar (also with reason) names. This is "covered" by an apology in the foreword. A brief survey of the various schools — American, Swedish, German, Soviet, French and Italian — concludes a good little lexicon that is, also, a useful quick-reference work, that is, if you're not too inquisitive.

Luckily for *The Western* and for all aficionados of the fast draw, America's foremost authorities on the subject, George Fenin and William Everson, decided to do the first full-scale history of this most indigenously American of films. The result is not only a definitive work on the subject but a bang-up (that's the right word, alright) job. From *The Great Train Robbery* to *How the West Was Won*, a span of almost 60 years, the exhilarating story is told (and illustrated with almost 200 stills) of the great open spaces of the American west and its motley denizens and how they helped push the frontiers back to the Pacific and shape a new country in the "new world." It's a story thrice-familiar to all, being not only part of our own mythology and folklore but, I dare say, part of the whole world's folklore by now, as there must be few places on earth today where the Western film is not only recognized and understood but vociferously received. Well, here it is, and, here they all are, the archetype cowboys (Bill Hart, to whom the book is justly dedicated, Hoot Gibson, the Farnums, Buck Jones, etc.) and their latter day successors from Tom Mix, who introduced the slick cowboy with a touch of showmanship, to Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, not forgetting those modern counterparts of the laconic early fast-draw fellows — John Wayne, Joel McCrae and, of course, Gary Cooper. The Indians, the horses, the buffaloes, the alkalai dust they kicked up, the war hoots and crack of gun fire, the creak of coaches carrying the mail, bullion or the new pretty school marm, the ubiquitous sheriffs, the assorted villains and badmen, the land-rushes and gold-rushes, the desert, the plains, the mountains — every memory of childhood (and what kind of childhood was it that didn't know all there was to know about the "wild west"?) is stirred up anew by this book which evokes all the legendary characters again. The first real American movies were Westerns and we're still at it. Anything that has that long staying power must have something very valid about it and so it has. To sum up: a grand story, grandly told,

but a serious study, too, and as much a part of history of the cinema as an art as any other part of it.

As for *L'Erotisme au Cinema*, nothing could be farther from *The Western* than this. If you already have the first two volumes of Prof. Lo Duca's unique trilogy on eroticism in the movies, there is absolutely no reason why you shouldn't have the third. It's the mixture as before, but what a mixture!

The Player is a collection of some 55 so-called autobiographies of as many well-known actors and actresses of stage and screen. Though cast in autobiographical form, they are based on interviews and follow a general pattern, in which the player discusses his or her life, career, technique and philosophy. Kim Stanley, Ingrid Bergman, Cedric Hardwicke, Henry Fonda, John Gielgud, Katharine Cornell, Burgess Meredith, etc. The selection is both representative and sufficiently varied. Ideal inspirational stuff for budding young hopefuls of the stage and screen and a good reference work, too.

Leaves: *The Stars*, billed by its publisher as "the most beautiful book about the movies ever published." If by this they mean the size (9x12½) and the many full-page illustrations and the flossy dust-cover, it doesn't qualify. There have been film books this size before with just as flossy dust-covers, and, as for the illustrations, there have been books with full-page illustrations this size before, too. Anyway, the illustrations are all in photo-offset, often of a particularly unbrilliant kind, as offset so frequently is. Surely, they cannot seriously mean the text which, like the subject and illustrations, is pure "fan" stuff that would not be out of place in any movie fan magazine catering to the teen-age gum-chewers and pop-corn crunchers who are supposed to be the mainstay of the American cinema. It is the kind of text with a passage like: "*No doubt,*" says the *recondite Tyler Parker . . .*" That's how recondite the text is. It is just as unrecondite in its repetitions of weary canards about Stroheim (about the sneezing dog and monogrammed extras' underwear and other such nauseous drivel) and the sort of film book in which Mae West, Rita Hayworth, and Marie Dressler come off considerably better than Sternberg, which is, of course, idiotic. In short, a book that is the apotheosis of the cliché, a trivial book whose only value for serious film students is in its collection of stills, some 400 of them. The period from silence to sound is covered.

— H. G.W.

FILM: BOOK 2. FILMS OF PEACE AND WAR. Edited by Robert Hughes. Grove Press, 64 University Place, New York. 1962. 255 pp. Price: \$4.75(hard covers); \$1.95(paper bound). Partial listing of contents: "Hiroshima Mon Amour," a composite interview with Alain Resnais; An interview with John Huston; An interview with Norman McLaren; Questions and answers on peace and war by Robert Bresson, Samuel Fuller, Jean-Luc Godard, Len Lye, Arthur Miller, Jean Renoir, Francois Truffaut, Sergei Gerasimov, and others. Articles and essays: "Designing Pacifist Films," by Paul Goodman; "Hiroshima in Film," by Donald Richie; "Patriotism in Hollywood," by Colin Young; "The Uses of History in Western Europe," by Neil Morris; "Films to Unite the Nations," by Thorold Dickinson. Two scripts (transcriptions) "Let There Be Light" (John Huston), and "Night and Fog" (Alain Resnais). *Recommended by Film Culture.*

INGMAR BERGMAN: WIE IN EINEM SPIEGEL (Scenario of "Through a Glass Darkly"). Text in German. No. 1 book in a new series called Cinemathek, published by Marion von Schroeder Verlag, Hamburg, 86 pp. Price: DM 1.—

RENE CLAIR: SCHWEIGEN IST GOLD (René Clair's scenario for *Silence Is Gold*). In German. Volume No. 2 in the Cinemathek series, Marion von Schroeder Verlag, Hamburg. 116 pp. Price: DM 1.— (Other projected volumes include scenarios for Fritz Lang's "M" and Luis Bunuel's *Viridiana*.)

SWEDISH FILMS. By Einar Lauritzen. The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, 11 West 53rd Street, New York. 32 pp. Illustrated. Pro-

gram notes for the program "Swedish Films 1909-1957," Museum of Modern Art, October 10, 1962—January 5, 1963. *Recommended by Film Culture.*

JEAN VIGO. Cinematheque Suisse, Lausanne, 1962. Edited by Freddy Buache. 74 pp. In French. Contents: "L'Execution de Marineche," a scenario by Claude Aveline and Jean Vigo; "Le Timide qui a pris feu," a scenario by Claude Aveline; "Le Coeur Vole," a scenario by Philippe Soupault; comments on Vigo by Paul Leutat, Henri Agel, J. F. Aranda, Raymond Borde, Edgar Morin; bibliography.

ANARCHY. A Journal of anarchist ideas. 17a Maxwell Road, London SW6, England. No. 6: Anarchy & Cinema. Among the articles: "The Anarchism of Jean Vigo," by John Ellerby; "The Animated Film Grows Up," by Philip Sansom; "Making The Little Island," by Dick Williams; "Luis Bunuel: Reality and Illusion," by Rufus Segar; "The Innocent Eye of Robert Flaherty."

INDIAN FILM CULTURE, Vol. 1, No. 1, April 1962. Quarterly Journal of the Federation of Film Societies of India, B-5, Bharat Bhawan 3, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta 13, India. Valuable for its articles on Indian and African cinema.

FICHE FILMOGRAPHIQUE. Published by I.D.H.E.C., 92, Champs Elysees, Paris 8, France. No. 169: "L'Indendant Sansho" (Mizoguchi); No.170; "Zazie dans le Metro" (Malle); No. 171; "Le Amiche" (Antonioni).

CLASSICS OF THE FOREIGN FILM, A Pictorial Treasury. By Parker Tylet. 253 pp. Ill. (The Citadel Press, New York). \$8.50. *Recommended by Film Culture.*

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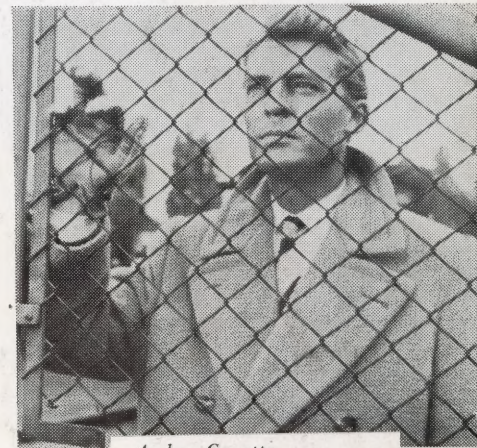
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